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Communication Tips for Parents

By Teri Claassen MSW, LCSW, LCAC

29 Key Tips for Communication

1. Maintain good eye contact. It shows you aren't distracted.
2. Ask them about their day and share about yours. They might open up more if you are open too.
3. Listen to the little stuff. It will make them more likely to come to you about big stuff.
4. Make an effort to spend time talking daily. Turn off the TV. Take advantage of riding in the car to talk.
5. Ask them their opinion about things. You might learn something about them.
6. Make their vote count sometimes. It makes them feel heard.
7. Praise them for the good things they do. You should praise more than you criticize.
8. Ask open ended questions.
9. Even when you are busy, give them some undivided attention. It shows they are still a priority to you.
10. Respect them. If you want them to respect you, you should do the same.
11. Avoid name calling, put downs, and aggressive words. This can greatly damage their self-esteem and make them feel not good enough.
12. Be a good role model. They learn from watching you. So be careful what you do, they might pick it up.

13. Don't interrupt.
14. Say "I love you" at all ages.
15. Say "I know" rather than "It's okay" when your child is upset. This makes them feel like you are empathizing with them rather than telling them they shouldn't be upset.
16. Dig deeper. Ask them how a situation made them feel and how it affected them.
17. Become familiar with the things your child is interested in. It will give you more topics to talk about and make them feel more understood.
18. Be honest with them.
19. Don't make them carry too much adult information. Have good boundaries for how much you share.
20. Allow it to be ok for them to disagree with you. It doesn't mean they always get their way, but it helps them learn that their opinion is okay and you can agree to disagree.
21. Avoid getting defensive. It will tell them you aren't going to listen to them, and they might stop sharing.
22. Ask them what they need from you. Your child might just want you to listen instead of always giving advice.
23. Be yourself with them. They need to know you aren't perfect and that you learn from mistakes too.
24. Apologize to them when needed. They will respect you for it.
25. Don't sweep things under the rug. If there is an issue, address it.
26. Don't trick your child. If you already know the answer, why give your child the chance to lie? Confront the issue and let them share their side of the story.
27. Easy on the teasing. It can impact their self-esteem.

28. Don't set them up to fail.

29. Teach them emotions are okay. Share yours with them too.

About Renewed Horizon

Renewed Horizon is a Christian counseling practice that serves individuals, couples, families, and teens to address difficulties in life. It is a place to find guidance, healing, and hope when life feels hopeless and unimaginable.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” ~ II Corinthians 5:17





Teri Claassen received her Bachelor's Degree from Anderson University with a double major in Psychology and Family Science. She completed her graduate studies at Indiana University where she received her Masters in Social Work.

Teri is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Florida and Indiana and a Licensed Clinical Addictions Counselor in Indiana.

Teri was a Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) and a member of The National Council on Family Relations for 8 years. She is currently a member of The National Association of Social Workers.

Teri has been in private practice since 2004 serving various populations including individuals, couples, teens, families, and kids.