

Tip Sheet for Families

How to talk to your children:

Things to share with your child:

Share what is important to you as parents

Why it is important:

Children learn their values and what to believe from their parents.

What you can say or what it looks like:

“It is important to me that you are respectful to adults.”

Things to share with your child:

Share what is important to you as a family.

Why it is important:

- Children grow into adults who act like their parents.
- When you share what is important to your family, they can learn what they want for themselves and their family too.

What you can say or what it looks like:

“Sunday is the day we spend together as a family.”

Things to share with your child:

Listen to your children when they talk to you.

Why it is important:

- Children feel important and loved when they are listened to by others.
- If they are not allowed to share their thoughts or are ignored when they speak, they do not know how much they mean to you.

What you can say or what it looks like:

- Give your child your attention by looking at them or stopping what you are doing to listen.
- Respond to what your child says.

Things to share with your child:

Tell your children when they make you happy and when you are proud.

Why it is important:

- Children like to make parents and adults happy.
- When they know they have done something well, they will keep doing well

What you can say or what it looks like:

“You worked hard in the yard today helping your brother; the yard is so clean! I am proud of your hard work.”

Limits and boundaries:

What children need:

Children depend on adults to set limits, rules, and boundaries.

Why it is important:

- Children who do not have rules have a difficult time understanding what is right and wrong.
- Children need parents to make the rules.

What you can say or what it looks like:

Parents need to decide what the rules and limits are together.

What children need:

Children need to know what they can and cannot do.

Why it is important:

Parents need to tell children what the rules of the house are and what they are allowed to do at home and away from home.

What you can say or what it looks like:

“I need you to come home afterschool and do your homework. If you want to go to your friend's house, you need to ask me first.”

What children need:

Children need to know if the rules can change.

Why it is important:

Parents need to set the rules and try not to change them unless the child gets older and needs different rules.

What you can say or what it looks like:

“Now that you are in high school, you can go to the football games by yourself. You were too young to do that last year.”

Consistency

What children need:

- Children need to know what will happen if they break the rules.
- Many children will test the rules to see what a parent will do.

Why it is important:

- Parents need to have a consequence for a broken rule.
- The consequence should be related to the rule.

What you can say or what it looks like:

“You went to play outside before you finished your chores. Today you cannot go out to play until you finish your chores and wash the dishes.”

What children need:

Children need the rules and limits to stay the same.

Why it is important:

- Changing rules and limits is confusing for children.
- If rules change often, children feel the rules are not important enough to follow.

What you can say or what it looks like:

“I know you want to visit your friend before your homework is done, but the rule is homework first. You can go when you show me your homework is done.”

What children need:

Children need to know why there are limits to what they are allowed to do.

Why it is important:

- Explain to children why they are allowed or not allowed to do things.
- Maybe there are worries about safety or maybe the child has responsibilities at home that must be done before play can happen.
- When children understand why, they are more likely to follow the rules.

What you can say or what it looks like:

"I worry when you are out at night after the football game. That is why the rule is to come home after it is over. Your friends can come to our house where I know you are safe."

Sharing Expectations

Things to share with your child:

Tell children how you want them to behave at home, at school, or in the neighborhood.

Why it is important:

Parents are their children's first teacher; children learn how to behave from parents

What you can say or what it looks like:

"I expect you to represent our family well by saying please and thank you and addressing adults by Sr. or Sra."

Things to share with your child:

Tell children how you want them to talk to you and other family members and adults

Why it is important:

- This teaches children how to be respectful and how to interact with others.
- Children learn this by watching their parents and by following instructions from parents.

What you can say or what it looks like:

"I expect that you use your manners when you speak to me and not interrupt adults when they are talking. You can say 'excuse me' if you need to interrupt."

Things to share with your child:

Tell children what you need them to do for the family.

Why it is important:

- Being part of a family means everyone works together.
- Giving children jobs to do around the house teaches them the value of hard work.

What you can say or what it looks like:

“We all live in this house, so we all need to share the work of taking care of the house. Your jobs are to clean your room and dump the trash. Are there other jobs you can help with?”