

Assertive Communication

Assertive communication is telling someone what you need in a way that is clear and straightforward. Tone of voice, body language and words contribute to a person's communication style. Parents can use the skills below to improve the way they communicate with their children, especially when setting and enforcing limits.

Communicating Assertively

1. **Focus on what you want.** When a child misbehaves, parents often react immediately by telling the child what is wrong with the behavior. Instead, effective communication begins with taking a moment to consider what behavior you want to see, and then asking the child to do that.
2. **Communicate effectively to get what you want.** Use assertive body language and tone of voice, and choose respectful words when communicating.
3. **Model effective communication.** Be assertive in your interactions with others. Your child often picks up information about how to act by watching how you handle yourself in different situations.
4. **Role play.** With your child, practice effective communication in different scenarios. Encourage your child to focus on what he or she wants, and ask for it.



Example

Your child is playing in the house, and is beginning to get too excited and loud. Take a moment to think about what behavior you want to see. Then, face your child and make eye contact. Using a calm, clear voice say, "Please speak softly when you are playing inside."

References

Bailey, B. A. (2000). *Conscious discipline: 7 basic skills for brain smart classroom management*. Orlando: Loving Guidance, Inc.
 ChildBuilders. (2014). *Build to nurture*. Houston, TX: ChildBuilders.