



Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

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Three Main Keys to Communicating with your Child

Praise your child when they do something right. The more you praise a behavior, the more likely it is your child will behave the same way again.

Pay attention when your child is talking to you or trying to communicate with you. Giving your full attention will help you understand what your child is telling you. It will also make your child feel like you care about what they have to say.

Set aside time each day to talk and play with your child. Creating a special time lets your child know they are important. It also strengthens the bond between the two of you.

Responding to Behavior

Giving your child positive attention for good behavior can boost self-esteem, improve your relationship, and help your child understand the behaviors you like and want to see more often.

Praise

Praise means giving attention to your child for something they have done that you like.

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Praise should be as specific as possible.

Use labeled praise to tell your child exactly what you like. Sometimes labeled praise is best when it is not expected. If your child is playing quietly in the living room while you are cooking dinner, take the time to let your child know you like it. You might say, "It's so nice when you are playing quietly all by yourself while I am trying to cook dinner!" This will send a message to your child that you are paying attention.

Hugs, high-fives, a pat on the head, or a pat on the back along with labeled praise can give more power to your praise.

Some parents notice their child's behavior gets worse when being praised. [Click here to get some ideas from parenting experts about how to address this issue.](#)

Some parents find it difficult to find things to praise about their child's behavior. [Click here to learn some ways to address this issue from parenting experts.](#)

Imitation

Imitation happens when you copy or mimic things your child does.

Imitation is when you play with the same or a similar toy and copy the

way your child is playing with it. Any behavior that is imitated by you is likely to be repeated by your child, so carefully choose which behaviors to imitate.

Match your actions to your child's activity. Try not to do it better or faster, which could discourage your child.

Whatever you imitate will likely occur again. It is best to model or demonstrate positive or appropriate behaviors.

If you imitate behavior or words that are not appropriate, your child is more likely to say or do those things again. Inappropriate behaviors and words can be ignored if they are not dangerous for anyone else or destructive. If your child is doing something that is dangerous or destructive, stop those behaviors immediately.

Description

Description involves giving attention to good behavior and talking about what your child is doing.

When you use description, you describe your child's activities as a sports reporter or commentator would describe it. You provide a lot of detail so that someone who is listening, but not watching, would know what your child is doing. Focus on describing your child's

good behaviors. If you describe misbehavior, your attention will likely cause those behaviors to happen more often.

Active Listening

When parents actively listen to their children, they show that they care and are trying to understand how the child feels about what is happening. Reflection is one way for you to show that you are actively listening to your child.

Reflection of what your child says: Repeat out loud what your child says. You can extend, add to, shorten, or correct what your child says. For example, your child says: "I drew some sghetti!" You might say: "You drew some long spaghetti." (grammar and pronunciation correction with elaboration)

Reflection of your child's feelings: Notice how your child feels about something and describe the feelings with words. For example, your child is: crying/seems sad. You might say: "I can see that you're upset."

Reflection of emotions is not always easy. Here are some tips to make it easier.

Take a guess even if you are unsure.

Words aren't needed all the time.

You don't always have to agree.

Talk about other feelings.

Special Playtime

Special playtime is time you spend with your child when you focus on the positive things your child does. Special time with your child is important in building a nurturing relationship. Keep the following in mind during special playtime:

- Try to make special playtime at the same time each day and have it at a time when you can focus only on your child.
- Try to spend at least 5-10 minutes each day on special playtime.
- Let your child lead the play.
- Praise your child's good behaviors.
- Imitate your child's behavior.
- Describe what your child is doing.
- Reflect your child's words and emotions.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Limit questions and commands during special playtime, as they take the lead away from your child.
- Try to stay positive and avoid criticisms during special playtime.
- Ignore minor misbehaviors during special playtime.
- Have fun and be silly!

Reprinted from CDC, Essentials for Parenting Toddlers and Preschoolers: Quick Tips (<https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/toddlersandpreschoolers/communication/quicktips.html>)

What happens when children read during summer break?



Children can lose months worth of reading skill improvement over summer break – but they don't have to.

Simply reading for pleasure causes children to practice and retain skills they learned during the school year. Pleasure reading during school breaks builds vocabulary and background knowledge, an important factor in reading comprehension.

Spending vacation time with books also teaches children that books are something they get to enjoy -- not just something they have to deal with during school.

Summer learning loss is cumulative, so students who lose reading skill each summer tend not to progress as far the following school year. By the time they reach high school, students can be a year or more below their reading potential, which makes everything else in life more difficult.

A proven way to prevent this problem – read for fun. Anything counts – sports magazines, mysteries, picture books, comic books, animal, fantasy, non-fiction. Reading to children benefits them, as well as when they read on their own. Children who are read to are more likely to pick up books and read on their own.

-Reprinted from Read Aloud West Virginia, Summer 2023

Concerned about Development?

How to Get Help for Your Child



Talking to the doctor is the first step toward getting help for your child if you are concerned about his or her development (how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves). **Don't wait.** Acting early can make a real difference!

1 Make an appointment with your child's doctor

- When you schedule the appointment, tell the doctor's staff you have concerns about your child's development that you would like to discuss with the doctor.

2 Complete a milestone checklist

- Before the appointment, complete a milestone checklist by downloading CDC's free [Milestone Tracker mobile app](#) from the App Store or Google Play or printing a paper checklist from www.cdc.gov/Milestones.
- Write down your questions and concerns; take these with you to the doctor's appointment.

3 During the doctor's appointment

- **Show the completed milestone checklist to the doctor**
 - > If your child **is** missing milestones, point them out, and share any other concerns that you have.
 - > If your child **is not** missing milestones but you still have concerns, tell the doctor about them.
- **Ask the doctor for developmental screening for your child**
 - > Developmental screening is recommended whenever there is a concern. It gives the doctor more information to figure out how best to help your child.
 - > For more information about developmental screening, go to www.cdc.gov/DevScreening.
- **Ask the doctor if your child needs further developmental evaluation**
 - > If your child does, ask for a referral and call right away. If you have difficulty getting an appointment, let the doctor know.

4 Make sure you understand what the doctor tells you, and what to do next

- Before you leave the appointment, check the notes you have written and make sure all of your questions have been answered.
- If you do not understand something, ask the doctor to explain it again or in a different way.
- When you get home, review your notes and follow the steps the doctor has given you. Remember, you can always contact the doctor's office if you have any questions.

You Know Your Child Best

If your child's doctor has told you to "wait and see," but you feel uneasy about that advice:

Talk with others (doctor, teacher, another provider) to get a second opinion

AND

Call for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get free or low-cost services that can help.

- **If your child is under age 3:** Call your state's early intervention program. Find the phone number at www.cdc.gov/FindEI.
- **If your child is age 3 or older:** Call the local public elementary school.

You do not need a doctor's referral to have your child evaluated for services.

Find more information, including what to say when you make these important calls, visit www.cdc.gov/Concerned.

Don't wait.
Acting early can make a real difference!



www.cdc.gov/ActEarly

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

Learn the Signs. Act Early.



Download CDC's free Milestone Tracker app

