Healthy Family Communication

Communication — the exchange of verbal and non-verbal information — is the foundation of relationships. Families who practice positive communication help their children develop trust, self-esteem and problem-solving skills that they will use their entire lives. So, how can we teach positive communication and help our kids make it a powerful lifelong habit? We can:

Be active listeners and listen more than we talk. We can put away our phones, turn off nearby media, and give our child our full attention. We can nod, smile, touch, maintain eye contact and allow for pauses and silences — rather than jumping in with comments or advice. We can ask thoughtful questions to better understand our child.

Show empathy and stay calm. We can relax and absorb everything our child is expressing. We can put ourselves in their place and tune in to what they're feeling. We can be sure our own frame of mind is compassionate, rather than judgmental.

Be clear, honest and kind with our words. Before speaking, we can consider the message we want to deliver and double-check our own intentions to be sure our message is gentle, helpful and necessary. Then, we can speak simply and from the heart.

Use 'I' statements rather than 'you' statements. For example, instead of telling your tween “You’re not getting to bed early enough, you’ll be tired tomorrow,” you can say something like “I’ve noticed your bedtime has been later recently, and I’m concerned that your body needs more sleep.”

Guide our kids to solve their own problems. For example, if a preschooler is having trouble putting her shoes on, you can sit beside her with your own shoes, and try something like this: “I have that problem too! Sometimes it helps if I first loosen my laces, like this. Want to try it with yours?” Then patiently encourage her while she figures it out. Guiding older kids often means listening carefully while they explain their problem in detail, then posing thoughtful questions to help them discover their own solution.

Positive communication creates a tight family bond that endures even after our children are grown and have kids of their own. It's always worth the effort to improve our communication skills — and it's never too late to learn!

TO LEARN MORE:
Visit apa.org/helpcenter/communication-parents.
Vaccine Safety

Your child's doctor wants you to know that vaccines are safe. Vaccines work, and they are necessary. The measles outbreak in Washington state shows why vaccines are needed. To ensure safety, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reviews all aspects of every vaccine and will not license a vaccine unless it meets strict safety standards. After FDA review, a vaccine is also reviewed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Only after being approved by all four groups is a vaccine officially recommended to be given to children. If you have questions or doubts about vaccines, ask your child's doctor. It's always best to get health information from a medical professional.

TO LEARN MORE:
Watch the CDC’s video at youtu.be/Fcvgp6gNh6o.

Poison Prevention for Kids Under 6

In 2017, the Washington Poison Center dealt with 55,247 poison exposures of people, and children under age 6 accounted for almost half of these cases. This is alarming, especially considering that nearly 80% of the poisonings were unintentional. The 10 most common substances that poisoned children ages 0 to 5 in 2017 were: cosmetics and personal-care products; household cleaning products; pain medicines; foreign bodies (including toys and miscellaneous items); skin creams and ointments; vitamins; plants; dietary supplements (including herbal and ‘natural’ products); antihistamines; and pesticides.

Nine out of 10 poisonings occur at home. Since kids are curious explorers who get into things they shouldn’t, it’s crucial to prevent them from finding household items that could be dangerous. Store poisonous items out of sight and reach when possible or use safety locks. And in case your child does ingest something harmful, be prepared by programming the toll-free Poison Help Number, 1-800-222-1222, into all your phones and be sure caregivers have it.

TO LEARN MORE:
Visit wapc.org.

Prevent Non-Swim-Time Drownings

Among children ages 1 to 4, drowning is a leading cause of death — second only to birth defects. Many parents are surprised to learn that when very young children drown, nearly 70% of those deaths happen when no one thought the child was supposed to be in the water.

Most non-swim-time drowning deaths among children ages 1 to 4 occur in an unoccupied swimming pool. Typically, a child walks or crawls away from adult supervision without being noticed. Drowning can happen quickly and quietly anywhere there is enough water. Young children also drown in ponds, lakes, rivers and other open waters when they wander off on their own. And every year in the U.S., about 20 children drown in buckets when they fall in head-first. In bathrooms, they can fall head-first into a toilet or climb into a full bathtub.

Prevent unsupervised access to water. Assess potential risks inside, outside and near your home and any other locations you visit, including other people's homes, hotels or campgrounds. If a pool is nearby, ensure there is a secure barrier between it and your child. Empty all bathtubs, buckets, containers and kiddie pools immediately after use. For items that can collect water, always store them upside down. Keep bathroom doors closed and use a safety latch on toilets. And of course, during bath time, never leave a baby or toddler alone — not even for a second.

Learn CPR and basic water rescue skills. These can save a life when there is an emergency.

TO LEARN MORE:
Visit seattlechildrens.org/dp.
Quick Tip

Protect young children. Install guards or stops to limit windows from opening more than 4 inches.

Stuttering

Stuttering is common among toddlers and preschoolers, and it usually goes away on its own before long. A child who is developing a stutter may struggle to say certain sounds or words. They may repeat the first sound of words (like “buh-buh-buh-boy”) or stretch out sounds (like “ffff-ast”) and pause noticeably between words. They may also show frustration when trying to get the words out. For parents, it’s important to encourage the child, give them plenty of time to talk and don’t interrupt or tell them to slow down. Speech problems are easiest to correct before age 4, so if stuttering is frequent and doesn’t seem to be improving, see your child’s doctor, who may recommend a speech therapist.

TO LEARN MORE:
Search ‘stuttering’ at seattlechildrens.org.

Sportsmanship

Whether your child is just starting to play sports or has been competing for years, it’s always a good idea to talk about sportsmanship — and model it yourself. Sportsmanship is about playing by the rules, enjoying the game, and showing respect to coaches, officials, teammates and opponents. It’s important to practice sportsmanship before and after the game, not just during. And since the ride home can be a sensitive time for young athletes, avoid discussing their performance, coaching decisions or a referee’s call. Follow their lead: if your child is silent, they probably need that silence. If they’re chatty, listen and engage. No matter what — win or lose — let your kid know that you love watching them play!

TO LEARN MORE:

A Cold or Seasonal Allergies?

Colds and seasonal allergies share some symptoms, but there are distinct differences, too. Both can cause a runny nose and watery eyes. Both might cause a cough — but it’s less common with allergies. Seasonal allergies (also called hay fever) can trigger itchy eyes and nose; a cold does not. And seasonal allergies strike during pollen season: did your child have the same symptoms at the same time last year? While a cold may include a fever and sore throat, allergies do not. And cold symptoms last one to three weeks versus allergy symptoms, which last six to eight weeks for each pollen. If you suspect allergies, visit your child’s doctor, who can make a diagnosis and create a treatment plan.

TO LEARN MORE:
Visit seattlechildrens.org/conditions/a-z/hay-fever.

Regional Clinic Locations
- Bellevue
- Everett
- Federal Way
- Olympia
- Tri-Cities
- Wenatchee

Primary Care Clinic
- Odessa Brown Children’s Clinic

Main Hospital Numbers
206-987-2000
866-987-2000 (Toll-free)

Online Resources
Visit seattlechildrens.org for the following:
- Child Health Advice
- my Good Growing email newsletter
- Doctor Finder
- Seattle Mama Doc, Teenology 101, Autism and On The Pulse blogs
- Medical condition information
- Health & safety information
- Ways to help Seattle Children’s
- Research Institute information

Heather Cooper is the Editor of Good Growing, which is produced four times a year by the Marketing Communications Department of Seattle Children’s. You can find Good Growing in the January, April, July and October issues of ParentMap and on our website seattlechildrens.org. For permission to reprint articles for non-commercial purposes or to receive Good Growing in an alternate format, call 206-987-5323. The inclusion of any resource or website does not imply endorsement. Your child’s needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon information, please talk with your child’s healthcare provider. © 2019 Seattle Children’s, Seattle, Washington.
Classes and Events

These classes are popular and often fill up several months in advance, so please register early. Scholarships are available. If you would like to ask about a scholarship, call the number provided for the class you're interested in.

PARENTING CLASSES

Autism 101
This free 90-minute lecture is designed to provide information and support to parents and families of children recently diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. A portion of each session is dedicated to answering questions from the audience.

Lectures are at Seattle Children's main campus in Seattle, once per quarter, on a Thursday, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Lectures are also available via live streaming.

View dates or sign up for live streaming at seattlechildrens.org/autism101. Call 206-987-8080 if you have questions.

Autism 200 Series
Autism 200 is a series of free 90-minute classes for parents and caregivers of children with autism who wish to better understand autism spectrum disorder. Each class features a different topic.

Classes are usually offered on the third Thursday of the month, 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Seattle Children's main campus in Seattle. These classes are also available through live streaming.

View dates and topics, sign up for live streaming or view past Autism 200 lectures at seattlechildrens.org/autism200. Call 206-987-8080 if you have questions.

Babysafe
Babysafe is a 4-hour class for new and expectant parents and others who care for babies. Topics include infant development, baby safety, injury prevention and care of common injuries for infants from birth through 12 months of age. Infant CPR is demonstrated and practiced, but this is not a certification class.

This class is offered in Seattle. The fee is $75 and each registration is good for 2 people from the same family. View dates and locations at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-987-2306 if you have questions.

Heartsaver First Aid, CPR and AED
This video-based class for parents and caregivers covers how to treat bleeding, sprains, broken bones, shock and other first-aid emergencies. Also includes infant, child and adult CPR and AED use. Students receive an American Heart Association Heartsaver First Aid, CPR, AED Completion Card that is valid for 2 years.

This class is offered at Seattle Children’s main campus in Seattle for $75 per session. View dates at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-987-2306 if you have questions.

Youth Mental Health First Aid
This 8-hour class is for adults who regularly interact with adolescents ages 12 to 18. Youth Mental Health First Aid will improve your knowledge of mental health and substance use problems and will teach you how to connect youth with care when needed.

This class is offered at the Sand Point Learning Center in Seattle for $20 per person, which includes class materials and lunch. View dates at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-987-9878 if you have questions.

CHILD, PRETEEN AND TEEN CLASSES

Better Babysitters
For youth, ages 11 to 14. Students learn about responsible babysitting, basic child development, infant and child care, safety, handling emergencies, age-appropriate toys, business tips and parent expectations.

This class is offered in Seattle, Bellevue, Everett and Federal Way. The cost is $45 per person. View dates and locations at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-987-9878 if you have questions.

CPR and First Aid for Babysitters
For youth, ages 11 to 15. Topics include pediatric CPR, treatment for choking, and first-aid skills. Students receive an American Heart Association Heartsaver Pediatric First Aid, CPR, AED completion card, which is valid for 2 years.

This class is offered at Seattle Children's main campus in Seattle for $75 per person. View dates at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-987-2304 if you have questions.

For Boys: The Joys and Challenges of Growing Up
This class is for boys, 10 to 12 years old, and a parent or trusted adult.

For Girls: A Heart-to-Heart Talk on Growing Up
This class is for girls, 10 to 12 years old, and a parent or trusted adult.

An informal, engaging format is used to present and discuss issues most on the minds of preteens as they begin adolescence: body changes, sex, and other growing-up stuff.

These classes are offered in Seattle, Bellevue, Everett and Federal Way in partnership with Great Conversations. The cost is $90 per parent/child pair; $70 per extra child. A copy of the book “Will Puberty Last My Whole Life?” is included.

View dates and locations at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-789-2306 if you have questions. Content outlines and short videos are available at greatconversations.com.

Sibshops
Sibshops are lively peer support groups for siblings of kids with special needs. Separate sessions are held for kids 6 to 9 years old and kids 10 to 13 years old.

Sessions take place at Seattle Children's main campus in Seattle at a cost of $25 per session. View dates online at seattlechildrens.org/classes or call 206-987-4133.

EVENTS

Free Safe Firearm Storage Giveaway
WHERE: Coastal Farm & Ranch, 2112 S 1st St., Yakima
WHEN: Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
CALL: 206-987-4133.

Free Bike Helmet Fitting and Giveaway
WHERE: MakeSureTheHelmetFits.org.
WHEN: Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
in Lynnwood
Saturday, May 11, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
in Richland
Saturday, June 8, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
in Federal Way

Free Car Seat Check
WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus, 4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle
CALL: 206-987-5999

Learn about the importance of safe firearm storage and get a free lock box or trigger lock, with hands-on training on proper use. Supplies are limited. First come, first served. No appointments needed. Learn more at MakeSureTheHelmetFits.org.

Free Safe Firearm Storage Giveaway
WHERE: Coastal Farm & Ranch, 2112 S 1st St., Yakima
WHEN: Saturday, May 19, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus, 4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle
CALL: 206-987-4133.

Learn about the importance of safe firearm storage and get a free lock box or trigger lock, with hands-on training on proper use. Supplies are limited. First come, first served. One free lock box or trigger lock per person (maximum 2 items per household). Must be present to receive free item. Recipient must be 18 or older. No ID required.

MakeSureTheHelmetFits.org.

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