

Take Notice

‘Being present in the moment’

Positive relationships

Communication

Listening

The power of play

Connection Cash

Communication and Wellbeing



This is where it all starts...and its important stuff!

Positive relationships and communication between parents and children are an important part of building a child's positive self-concept.

A person's 'self-concept' is their sense of who they are and how they feel about their place in their family and community.

A child's ability to manage stress, feel confident and motivate themselves in later life has a lot to do with their early childhood experiences.

This begins to develop between the ages of two and six years.



Time to play!



Communication – what do we mean?

When we talk about communication, we often think mostly about talking and the things that we say.

Communication with children is a lot about the things that we or they say, but also the way in which we say them, as well as how we respond and listen to them.

We also need to take into account the non-verbal forms of communication. Body language and behaviour forms a large part of how we communicate - 55% of the way we communicate is through body language.



What does communication with your child look like to you ?

We all lead very busy lives where there simply isn't enough time in the day. Every day, our children experience various forms of communication with us. Sometimes these might look like this:

- 'Mummy doesn't have time right now', 'Just give me two minutes', 'I will play, but later I have got to take this call right now', 'Just let me make dinner first'.
- Most of the time when I am talking to my child my back might be to her, I might not be facing her, not really giving her my undivided attention.

Other times, our communication might be more positive and focused:

- Asking my daughter how her day was on the drive home from school
- Chatting at the table over dinner – no screens or devices on
- Not overwhelming her with questions about her day, waiting until she is ready to communicate and just being with her- sometimes its about 'just being there and present with her'
- Short, simple one step instructions to allow her time to process and respond.

At times, we experience more tricky examples of communication:

- Moans, stamping feet, eye rolls - body language
- Hiding under the kitchen table
- Hitting and screaming at me, saying unkind words
- Throwing items around the house, aggressive physical behaviour.

Did you know, all behaviour is a form of communication and can be a sign of an unmet need?



What does listening look like in your house?

STOP AND
GIVE ME 5!

HOW TO BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER	
1	EYES ARE LOOKING
2	EARS ARE LISTENING
3	MOUTH IS QUIET
4	BRAIN IS THINKING
5	BODY IS IN CONTROL

Communication and Wellbeing

- Positive, encouraging words help children to feel confident and happy.
- Praise reinforces good behaviour.
- Let them know you have faith in their abilities.
- Allow them plenty of opportunities to do things they enjoy and do well. Feeling competent builds self-esteem and confidence.
- Praise their efforts, not just their results. A child needs to know that it is okay to fail.
- Try to avoid always correcting your child's mistakes.
- Separate the child from their behaviour.
- Don't assume that they know how much you love them – tell them often.



All of these ways of communicating feed into the narrative that we tell ourselves as we grow up.



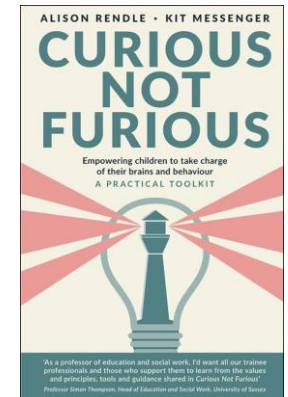
Connection Cash

Connection Cash is all about spending time and focussing on your child, communicating with them, spending time doing 'special play' with them and really giving them the connection they need.

- When you set out to strengthen your relationship with a child you might like to think of it in terms of putting a 'Connection Cash' into a relationship money box or bank.
- Having a strong feeling of connection delivers the Feel-Good Chemical 'Oxytocin'... and when Oxytocin flows around the body we feel better and **when children/people feel better, they do better!**

How can I spend my Connection Cash?

- Showing a genuine interest in whatever matters to your child (even if it doesn't interest you) – taking an interest will help to build up the money in that Connection Cash Piggy bank.
- Follow the principle **hands busy, eyes busy and brain free**, this means that if you can share an interest together and come up with an activity that is fun using your hands and your eyes then your brain is free for that all important connection.
- It is the best 'money' you will ever spend, just ten minutes of quality time can change how your day is going...



Communication and play

Positive playtime will really strengthen your bond with your child as the Cash Connection explained on the previous slide.

Here are some benefits of playing with your child:

- Children learn through play - they learn when the play is non-directive and contains no teaching.
- Play builds the parent-child relationship, Can you think back yourself to playing with your own parents? Do you have happy memories of this? Are you keen to spend time/play with your child in a similar way as your parents did with you?
- Play develops social skills and is excellent for wellbeing and boosting self-esteem!
- Play lets your child have a feeling of control – they aren't in control of anything else in their lives so play gives this opportunity.
- Play develops Speech and Language- this is a technique we also use in school, it allows children to learn and practice new words/phrases, build vocabulary, promotes active listening and responding and also turn taking.
- Play can also be a time to express feelings, talk about the day ,work through tricky thoughts and challenges.
- Rough and tumble play can help manage aggressive feelings and build confidence.

‘We don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing’

Some final thoughts....



CONNECT!

Get involved in your child's play.
Spend time with them doing the
things they like even if you don't
necessarily enjoy it yourself.

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BE PRESENT!

LISTEN!



Positive play and homework

Think back to the playdough tower task... how would you approach it differently if you did it again?

- Put your child in charge – play is not as fun if adults are making all the rules.
- Let your child lead – your child is to make all the decisions
- Go slow and make simple suggestions – ‘we could play with these toys or have a play battle outside’ – but let your child decide.
- Play can be short and sweet as discussed in Connection Cash, just ten minutes a day is great!
- A short stint of play can top up their ‘emotional cup’ and yours too!
- Provide Descriptive Commentary rather than asking questions ‘the train went through the tunnel’, ‘the cars are crashing’ – also an opportunity for language development and modelling language.
- Preparing for the end of positive play, give your child a warning and stick to the time set, that will help manage the child’s expectations for the next time you play. Expect some resistance but stick to the timings, perhaps plan something to do in your next positive play time.

What does listening look like in your house?

Busy, distracted parents tend to tune out a chattering child, which is understandable. If you constantly ignore your child, however, you send the message that listening isn't important and that what your child has to say isn't important to you.

If you want your child to be a good listener, make sure you're a good role model.

Listening actively helps children to feel heard and understood. Show that you are engaged with what your child is saying and really care.

Getting down to the same eye level as your child as they speak to you can help them feel safer and more connected to you.

Encourage your child's ideas and opinions. Positive communication is a two-way street in which both parties take turns listening and talking. The use of open ended questions and prompts can be used in conversation.

Resist the urge to prioritise correcting their grammatical errors – concentrate instead on what they are trying to say.

Building positive conversation will allow important or difficult issues to be discussed without the fear of over-reaction, criticism or blame.