

PATHWAYS
to COMPETENCE
for YOUNG CHILDREN
A Parenting
Program

by

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Am I Helping My Child Learn to Communicate?

Read the questions and circle "Yes" or "No" at the end of the questions.

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Do you talk with your child as you do daily activities with him or her such as dressing, feeding, and bathing him or her? | Yes | No |
| 2. Do you regularly have meals with your child and engage him or her as well as adults in the conversation? | Yes | No |
| 3. Do you talk about or explain activities of daily life with your child, such as when you are cooking dinner, cleaning the house, or going to the store? | Yes | No |
| 4. Do you engage your child in conversation while driving in the car together? Do you talk about what the child sees or sing and play games? | Yes | No |
| 5. Do you read aloud to your child? Do you talk about what has been read or the pictures he or she has seen? | Yes | No |
| 6. Do you engage your child in discussions about the television programs he or she watches or the movies he or she sees? | Yes | No |
| 7. Do you have your child talk about an argument that he or she is having with a sibling or friend in order to solve the problem or disagreement, or do you jump in and solve the problem yourself? | Yes | No |
| 8. Do you talk about the emotions your child or you may be feeling and do you label those feelings? (e.g., "You seem sad now that your friend has gone home?," "I am happy that we can play a game together")? | Yes | No |
| 9. Do you help your child as he or she is beginning to speak by extending his or her one or two words into phrases or sentences (e.g., The child says, "Mommy go" and you reply "Mommy is going to work today")? | Yes | No |
| 10. Do you look at your child when he or she is talking to you? Do you get down to the child's level to communicate with him or her? | Yes | No |
| 11. Do you take turns speaking and listening when talking to your child? Is there a dialogue that goes back and forth between you and your child? | Yes | No |
| 12. Do you expose your child to new vocabulary words by visiting new places (e.g., the zoo, a museum) or look at books with new ideas and concepts described with words or pictures? | Yes | No |


HANDOUT 5.4

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| 13. Do you give your child the opportunity to express his or her ideas when a decision is to be made for the child or the family? | Yes | No |
| 14. Think about your communication with your child during the last few days. Did you avoid yelling at or lecturing your child for most of the time? | Yes | No |
| 15. Do you take time every day to talk with your child about the experiences of his or her day and how he or she felt about it? | Yes | No |
| 16. Do you talk with your child about special events that occurred in the past or special events that are coming up in the future—a birthday party or a visit to grandmother’s house? | Yes | No |
| 17. When your child is playing do you enter into the play and ask questions about the actions of the play (e.g., “Where is teddy going? Is he going to the park?”) or give language to the activity or feelings (e.g., “Teddy is sad because the dinosaur went away”)? | Yes | No |
| 18. Do you help your child to learn and repeat nursery rhymes and songs? Do you use music and dance around when singing the songs together? | Yes | No |
| 19. Do you give your child a chance to express an opinion or make choices about things that are important to him or her? | Yes | No |
| 20. Do you ask your child to explain or describe the crafts he or she makes, the structures he or she builds, or the artwork he or she creates? | Yes | No |
| 21. When you want to communicate with your child, do you go where he or she is before speaking and make sure the child is looking at you and is ready to listen before beginning a conversation? | Yes | No |
| 22. If your child struggles to talk about things that have happened, do you use pictures or family photographs to help him or her remember and sequence the events? | Yes | No |
| 23. Do you cut out pictures from magazines or catalogues with your child and make a picture book and name the pictures together? | Yes | No |
| 24. Do you accept your child’s gestures such as pointing to something and say the word for him or her if you know he or she cannot say it? | Yes | No |
| 25. Do you try to follow your child’s lead and interest in conversations and avoid dictating the conversation all the time? | Yes | No |


HANDOUT 5.4

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|---|-----|----|
| 26. When your child seems upset but won't comment on what is bothering him or her, do you avoid further questioning and insisting on an answer and just let him or her know that you are there if the child changes his or her mind and wants to talk about it later? | Yes | No |
| 27. Do you use family mealtimes as a chance for everyone to talk about their day and how they felt about it? Do you encourage everyone to talk about one positive and one more difficult thing that happened? | Yes | No |
| 28. Do you try to observe your child and figure out how he or she is feeling and what he or she is trying to express, give the child a chance to say what is on his or her mind, and really "listen" to what he or she is trying to tell you? | Yes | No |

Total "Yes" Responses _____

Calculate the number of questions that you answered "Yes" to and note it on the line above. Look at the ones you answered "No" to, and over the next few weeks, see if you can try out some of the suggestions in these questions when you interact with your child.

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