



Talk with and listen to your child...

Effective parent-child communication is the foundation for building your child's self-esteem and fostering loving, supportive relationships with others. Keep the lines open and listen actively to what your child has to say...

- get your head physically on the same level as your child's when you talk
- use words and phrases that your children understand
- avoid including too many ideas in your messages
- repeat what your child is saying to you using different words
- give clear and consistent instructions defining the exact behaviour you want
- make sure your nonverbal messages do not interfere with or contradict your verbal messages

Praise your child for asking questions...

- make your messages complete and specific
- pay full attention to your child and maintain eye contact with him or her to enhance communication
- avoid thinking about your reply before listening to everything your child has to say
- teach your children not to interrupt and model that behaviour yourself
- ask what, how and why questions that promote discussion rather than questions requiring only yes or no answers
- be alert to body language and respond in kind just as you do with friends

Encourage responsibility...

- allow your children to solve as many of their own problems as they can
- let your child answer some of his/her own questions
- do not do things with a child that he/she can do for himself
- encourage your child to take risks
- praise accomplishments
- invite and consider your child's thoughts and feelings
- allow your child to make mistakes
- assist your child in weighing choices and examining consequences
- communicate your support to your child
- increase your child's responsibilities
- praise your child without words by using smiles and hugs

Never shake a baby



Taking care of a baby is a big responsibility.

- Maybe the baby has been crying a lot, and you cannot figure out why
- Maybe you are just plain tired and at the end of your rope

While it is OK to feel upset, it is NEVER OK to shake a baby. Shaking a baby can cause serious injury or even death!

Why do babies cry? Babies usually cry because they need something. Normally babies cry when they are

- hungry
- tired
- wet
- uncomfortable
- Sometimes your baby just wants to be picked up and held

Healthy babies may cry up to two or three hours a day. A baby with colic may cry all day long. For more information on healthy babies please contact Ottawa Public Health Information: 613-580-6744; toll-free 1-866-426-8885.

Things to try:

- give the baby a bottle or breastfeed
- gently rub the baby's tummy
- offer a pacifier—sucking is a comfort
- walk or rock the baby snuggled up close to your chest so the baby can feel your heartbeat
- take the baby for a walk in the fresh air
- sing or talk to your baby
- wrap the baby in a soft blanket
- call a friend or relative to talk about your frustration or see if they can relieve you for a while

Even the most patient of parents can get nervous or angry when their baby continues to fuss and cry despite their best efforts. They may even feel like shaking or hitting the baby...if you feel this way: take a break from the baby, hand him/her to someone else. If you are alone, it is ok to put the baby in the crib or playpen for a little while. All parents have the occasional feeling of anger and frustration. However, you must not take them out on your baby.

If you need help call (613) 747-7800

The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa (613) 747-7800

Courtesy of the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex



Babysitting is the transfer of childcare responsibilities from the parent or guardian to another responsible person. For babysitting to be successful everyone must be involved in planning and safety.

Parents must ensure that who they are choosing to watch their children are responsible and can keep the children safe and secure.

Who can babysit?

Adults or children over the age of 11 who have demonstrated that they can care for the children and can act responsibly if there is an emergency.

It is against the law to leave a child under the age of 10 to care for other siblings or children. We recommend that only children 12 and over be allowed to care for other children.

If you work during the entire day or night you may need to pay someone to look after your children while you work. There are several options you can look into, such as licensed day care centres, home-based day care, nursery schools, and "drop-in" day care centres. You can also hire someone to come into your home and look after your children. Look in the yellow pages under "Day Nurseries" or "Day Care." Also check the classified advertisements section of the newspaper under "Employment Wanted" to find a caregiver in your area. Government-subsidized daycare exists for low-income families.

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Source: Government of Canada Citizenship & Immigration, City of Toronto



Talking with teens can be refreshing and insightful...they should be a part of each day. Most conversations take place in the presence of other people...so find occasions to talk with your teen alone, away from brother, sister and anyone else.

Make sure you listen to what is being said, but also make sure you listen to what is not being said. Effective communications is the key to healthy relationships.

Some tips for parents...

- teens deserve respect
- adults should respect their teens and expect it in return
- adults should show respect for their teenager's friends
- never berate or belittle a teen in front of his/her peers

One of the biggest problems during adolescence is the power struggle that develops between teens and adults. Recognize the power struggle for what it is...the result of teens wanting to feel powerful in an adult world...find ways of working through it together.

...teens are apprentice adults, and they need time to breath and learn

...it is up to the adult to balance freedom and independence with good judgment about when to step in



When can I leave my child alone?

The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa recommends that children less than 12 years of age **not** be left alone without supervision. This means at home, the mall, the pool, etc... The parent/adult in charge must also make sure that the supervision and care is sufficient for the child.

How do you know if your child, who is 12 years old or more, is ready to be left alone?

Answer these questions:

- what is your child's developmental level?
- what is your child's ability to communicate?
- during what time of day will the child be alone?
- how long will the child will be alone?
- what will be the amount of responsibility required of the child?
- what is your child's level of competence?
- can they reach your or other adults/ friends and neighbours if assistance is required?
- is your home and neighbourhood safe?
- what is your child's ability to handle previous similar situations?