



## **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