

Appendix E2

COMMUNICATION GUIDES

I. COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATION

A. Cognitive/Content Component

1. Defined As

- a. Actual information
- b. Knowledge of choices and possible consequences

2. Some Means of Expression

- a. By our talking with children, they learn to understand.
- b. By our answering their questions, they come to understand.
- c. By brainstorming choices and analyzing consequences, they learn about cause and effect.
- d. By discussing, they evolve their own system of values.

B. Affective/Feeling Component

1. Defined As

- a. Feelings of those involved toward each other
- b. Feelings of those involved toward the content of the communication

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The writings of Gordon (1975), Dinkmeyer et al. (1987), Heath (2001), Satir (1976, 1988) and Galvin & Wilkerson (1998) were very helpful in developing this handout.

2. *Some Means of Expression*

- a. By the way we listen and take in their meaning, we tell them of their importance.
- b. By the tone of our voice and rapidity of speech, we tell them how we feel about them.
- c. Through facial expressions and body stance, we tell them how we feel.
- d. Through words and actions (physical contact), we tell them how we feel.

II. EFFECTIVE WAYS OF COMMUNICATING

A. Active Reflective Listening

- a. Centering the conversation on the feelings involved

B. Focusing

- a. Attending to the individual situation at hand

C. Clarifying

- a. Clearing up anything that is uncertain, to get a better picture of what is going on by asking for more information

D. Giving Information

- a. Making sure the listener has facts regarding your perspective

WORDS THAT CAN BE USED AS DOOR OPENERS

Tell me about it, I'd like to hear your thinking, tell me more, please, do you want to talk about it, let's discuss it, let's hear your side, sounds like you have a problem, seems like you have strong feelings about this, this seems important to you, please tell me the whole story as it occurred, let me ask you this to make sure I understand what you are saying.

SOME DETAILS REGARDING THE MOST COMMON TECHNIQUES FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION

- *I messages* involve stating your message subjectively. An example might be, “When you do not put the food back in the refrigerator, I feel frustrated because I have to throw it out.” This involves a “when” statement—a specific, nonblaming description of an action; an “I feel” response, which is your own feeling about the behavior; and finally a “because” statement, which helps the child understand the effect of the behavior on you or others or both.
- *Active listening* involves helping the sender better understand the thoughts and especially the feelings in the sender’s communication. “You sound upset by what the coach said to the team.”
- *Content paraphrase* involves putting facts into your own words and checking for accuracy. “So your teacher is saying you understand the information but do not seem to be putting in the effort?”

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As Galvin and Wilkerson (1998) have noted, “We can never not communicate.” In our silence, we are communicating something. Take the time to look at how you communicate to others and especially your children, both verbally and nonverbally. Make sure that a good percentage of what you share is nurturing communication, not simply functional communication. Share your values and beliefs so your children have a baseline from which to make their own informed choices. Remember that even in difficult times when children might be challenging, we must keep on talking and trying to make a connection.

We must at least communicate that we will be there for them during good times and bad.