

San Diego Center *for*
ADHD Coaching



10 tips

TO COMMUNICATE
EFFECTIVELY

with your child

BY

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5 tips to communicate effectively with your partner

Parenting a child with ADHD depending on the degree of the severity is generally very challenging. As a parent you would have to guess when the cause of an action is ADHD related or it is a normal developmental issue. The majority of the individuals with ADHD are extremely bright, constantly trying to negotiate, challenge the limits and are very demanding.

Therefore, even more reason for us parents the need to communicate effectively with them. In order for the communication to be effective first we would have to build up a relationship with them so they would at least listen to us.

It has been proven that punishment does not work with children in general and especially with the ones with ADHD. Usually what works best is consequences and depending on how old they are they can participate in choosing the consequences. You would be amazed how much harsher than you they can be on themselves.

Modeling is the best way you can communicate to your child what your expectations are from her/him. It is known that 95% of what children do is by modeling and only 5% is by listening to us!

Last, but not least educate yourself as much as possible about ADHD and remember that each child with ADHD is different and even though you are not responsible for your child's ADHD, understanding them and making sure that the environment is not hostile to them. Advocating for them and showing them how to advocate for themselves in all environments could make a big difference in their present and future well being and their happiness.

Below you will find some examples of very common and real situations and how to effectively communicate with your child when these situations arise and how not to. Some may be a little bit exaggerated with the purpose of making it more clear. Tone of voice is very important, too.

If you have any questions or are interested in further guidance, you can contact Roya Kravetz at 858.334.8584 or roya@adhdsuccesscoaching.com for a free 15 min. consultation.

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1. Use as few words as possible:

To do: Get Charlie's attention as you had previously agreed upon and just point your finger to the T.V and give the signal of five with your fingers meaning that in five minutes he would have to leave the TV.

To avoid: Charlie, turn off the T.V now right this moment! How many times do I have to repeat the same thing to you? Why can't you learn from your sister who is 3 years younger than you and I have to tell her everything only once?!

2. Choices are magical!

To do: Jenny, do you want to take a shower now or after dinner? This gives the power of decision to the child and when she/he feels powerful she/he is bound to be less oppositional.

To avoid: Enter the room and turn off the T.V and tell Jenny (yelling) "YOU ARE GETTING INTO THE SHOWER NOW OR ELSE I AM GOING TO TAKE YOUR COMPUTER AWAY FOR ONE MONTH!!!"



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3. Model for them what you want them to do.

Mom comes home and finds out that Jenny is texting when she was supposed to be studying.

To do: Sarah, I am feeling very frustrated right now so I am not going to get into the discussion at this time. I am going to my room to have some down time and when I feel calmer we shall talk.

To avoid: Sarah, you are grounded now! I'm going to tell your dad to take all of your electronic gadgets, including your phone, away for one week!

4. Communicate clear rules with your child and stick to them.

Since many individuals with ADHD are visual or kinesthetic learners make sure one of you writes the rules and puts it in front of their desk or wherever they spend more time at.

To do: David, you know what the rule is. We expect you to wake up in the morning by yourself using your alarm clock. If you cannot wake up on your own, you know what the consequences are.

To avoid: David get up it is already 7:00 am and it is the 3rd time that I am calling you this morning! You get up NOW! Do you hear me? Or else you will be grounded this weekend and you can't go to the video game convention!

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5. Acknowledge but do not praise.

Acknowledgement gives your children power and praising could be even belittling and does not sound genuine.

To do: You know Johnny the other day when I came home and you saw that I was carrying the groceries and you ran to the car and started taking the bags from me, that meant the world to me. That was so helpful and responsible of you.

To avoid: Johnny, wow what you did yesterday was great!! Good boy!

6. Try to start your sentences on a positive note so you don't put your child in a defensive mode.

To do: Alex, I know how much you love to listen to this music while driving; however, you know how sensitive I am to loud music so I would appreciate if you could lower it down while I am in the car with you.

To avoid: Alex I am ordering you to turn down that awful music or else I am going to turn off this radio! I said NOW!!!

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7. Talk with your child about your difficulties and issues that you have with your interpersonal relationships, be it at work with colleagues, or friends, etc.

Asking them about this opens the door for conversations about conflict in relationships and how to resolve them.

To do: Christine, I am very sad today since Betty at work was really upset with me. There was a misunderstanding and she did not get invited to the book club meeting I hosted here at the house. I'm not sure how to talk to her about it – will you help me think of ways I can talk to her about the mix-up?

To avoid: Today I am in a very bad mood since something bad happened between me and Betty. Please do not ask me what and don't talk to me about it!

8. Your defiant teen says that he is 18 and you don't have any right to know anything about his grades or what is happening at college!

To do: Linda, I agree with you that you are 18 and legally we do not have any rights. But, we also know that college is a whole different ball game and whether ADHD or not, there are lots of temptations and distractions. Therefore, we are just trying to help you and please do not forget that we are still paying for your college and therefore, we also have a right!

To avoid: Linda, of course we have a right to know about your grades and everything else that is going on in your life. Who cares that you are 18 when you act like a 14 year old? We demand that you do as you are told!

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9. Acknowledge their feelings even when you don't agree with them.

Sometimes that is the only thing they need from you.

To do: Tony, that really is a beautiful toy car and I understand why you want it. I wish I could buy that even for myself. I know how much you like it! (Then turn around and talk about something else.)

To avoid: Tony, there is no way in the world I am going to buy you this car! If you scream I am going to call store security and he will throw you out of the store!

10. Children who have ADHD often use the word “No” more than any other word!

If we tell them to never say No that is not good either since tomorrow they might not be able to say no to drugs, alcohol, etc. Therefore, we want to communicate with them to use the word No when necessary but in a respectful manner.

To do: Julie, when you say no to me before even having thought about it, it makes me feel that you are not listening to me. I would appreciate if you try to take a pause, think about what I told you and then if you still do not agree, tell me in a respectful manner.

To avoid: Julie, if I hear no from you one more time you will be grounded for one hour! I do not want to hear the word no from you at this house any more. Got it?