

HOW TO

TALK WITH

MOM AND

CHILD





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Part 1 • Introduction to Communication



A great dad communicates his thoughts, feelings, and actions on a daily basis in a way that respects others. Still, one of the greatest challenges great dads face in raising their children is how to better communicate with the mothers of their children and with their children.

Communication between parents usually doesn't cause problems until there are clear differences on how to raise their children. These problems between dads and the mothers of their children make it harder to raise their children. Parents' skills in solving these problems are vital to effective parenting.

As children get older, dads sometimes think that communicating with their children should get easier, not harder. While children become better able to express themselves through language, the challenge is that they become smarter as they age about how to use language. They become "wise" to their parents' ways of communicating and learn to use language to their advantage.

In *How to Talk with Mom and Child*, you'll learn advice and tips on how to better communicate with the mother of your child and with your child.

Where Do Communication Problems Start?

What makes a great dad different from other dads is that he understands problems with communication start with him and no one else.

Unfortunately, some dads disrespect others for communication problems. They blame and make fun of others, call people names, threaten and control others, even people in their own family. They demand things and give "the silent treatment" and "the look" that say they don't like what others say or do.

We can communicate with words or with our bodies. The use of words is what most people think of when they want to share their thoughts and feelings. But the fact is about 80 percent of the way in which people communicate is with the body instead of words (i.e. non-verbal).

Communication problems often start with poor patterns of communication—yours and those of the mother of your child.

When someone does something over and over again, it creates a pattern that others learn to expect from that person. People have patterns in how they act and how they talk.

Some patterns can create problems in a relationship over time. They become so much a part of what someone does or how they talk that people don't notice they have those patterns.

When we don't notice these bad patterns, we don't solve or get rid of them and they come back to haunt us time and again. Bad patterns can lead to problems when talking about a specific issue at a specific time. Problems can arise even when you don't follow those patterns and don't think you said or did anything wrong in that situation.

Think of a time when you started a communication problem with the mother of your child. How did you start it? Why did you start it? What should you have done differently?

How Story Lines and Plots Create Communication Problems

One of the main ways bad patterns play out and cause problems is they create story lines or plots that others expect you to follow even when you don't follow them.

Have you ever done or said something that seems fine only to have the mother of your children explode or react in a way that makes no sense at all? She reacted not to what you did right then but to a pattern you have that she thought would play out in that moment.

Story lines and plots have a lot of power. Have you ever read a book or watched a movie over and over again because you really liked it or it “spoke to you?” What gives story lines or plots their power is a message that connects with powerful feelings.

Bad patterns create feelings that trigger us to think and act in crazy ways. You tend to feel one of two things when these story lines and plots play out in your relationships—sad or mad.

Part 2 • Helpful Tips for Effective Communication



In this part of *How to Talk with Mom and Child*, you'll get advice and tips on how to better communicate with the mother of your child and your child. (Bonus: Much of the advice and tips will also help you to better communicate with almost anyone!)

7 Ways to Connect With Mom

Here are 7 great tips for effectively communicating with the mother of your child.

1. Value the need to change and listen

If you don't believe you need to change anything, you won't make the effort to listen to the need for change.

2. Value her

If you don't believe that she might have a point, you won't listen to what she has to say about a change you need to make. You'll see her as nagging you.

3. Be aware of your usual posture or response to change

4. Be aware of her mood

How you respond depends in part on how angry or nice she is at the time. If she's angry, she'll be less likely to hear you and will tend to react much worse to your response.

5. Be aware of your surroundings.

Who else is within hearing distance? Are you in a public place? It's best to talk about private things in private.

It's never too early to talk and listen to your child. Spend time with your child and have a purpose in what you do during your time together. Seize every moment to get practice “on the track.”

Rule #3—Make Adjustments

Drivers know success isn't simply about practice and performing well on the track. The best drivers know the importance of making adjustments.

Adjustments are crucial in racing. A driver that can't lead his team to make mid-race adjustments won't win. Likewise, you will learn to be a dad by trial and error. You will make mistakes. Things will go wrong. Great drivers know the importance of making adjustments, from research and development in the off-season to communicating the necessary adjustments to his team during the race.

Research and development is the science behind the racing. If you toured a NASCAR research facility, for example, you wouldn't see the driver and the car together.

Likewise, you will need to study fatherhood, even if you don't live with your child. Become a student of fatherhood. Learn from books, articles, magazines, and more experienced dads.

As a racecar driver, how you race depends on your knowledge and skill of the track, the amount of time you practice, and the amount of effort you use to make adjustments. With the right skills, experience, and practice, you can be successful with any track.

Coping with Co-Parenting: How You and Mom Can Work Together

It is ideal for children to grow up in a home with both of their parents. Unfortunately, the reality is many children are raised in single parent homes for a variety of reasons. In those cases where mom and dad aren't able to be together, they can still be effective co-parents for their children.

3. What do I really want out of the relationship?
4. How should I behave if this is what I really want for the mother of my child, my child, and myself?

It's vital that you strike a balance between what you want and what others want. That often means you must compromise and negotiate with the mother of your child.

Which of the four questions is the most difficult one for you to ask? Why is it the most difficult one, and what will you do to make sure you always ask it?

Confront, Don't Criticize

If you want to improve your communication with others, learn how to confront instead of criticize others more often when you have a problem with something someone did.

Criticism leaves a person feeling badly about him or herself. The person feels worthless, terrible, and lousy as an entire person.

Confrontation leaves a person knowing they have done something you don't like, but still feels positive about him or herself.

The difference between criticism and confrontation is the feelings the person is left with. Criticism uses blaming "You Messages." For example, "You're such a nag," and, "You're always yelling at me about not helping out."

Do you confront or criticize more often? When you criticize, how badly do you try to make the other person feel? What does he or she do when you criticize?

How to Use "I" Statements

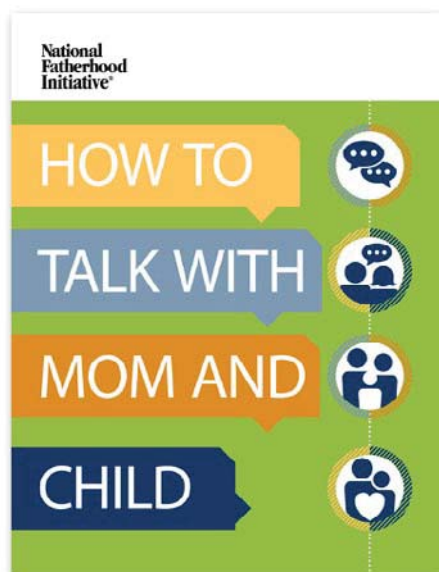
A great way to confront someone is to use "I Statements." They come in very handy when you face a tough issue with the mother of your child. (Bonus: These statements also work when you face a tough issue with your child.) They help you own your feelings about an issue rather than attacking the other person.

How to Talk with Mom and Child: The guide for learning how to communicate with mom and child effectively

NFI has served organizations working with fathers for two decades, and now, we have made our fatherhood advice available in a downloadable PDF file. The structure of each guide allows an organization to customize a discussion with dads in any way you want; or lets any dad use the resource at his own pace! Some ideas for using the guides:

- Share the guides with as many dads as you like.
- Print the PDF and give to the dads you serve, review it with them 1-on-1 or in a small group, or email it to them to read on a computer, tablet, or smart phone on their own time. You can even give them to moms to share with dads!
- This guide can reinforce (but not replace) the 24/7 Dad® program or any other fatherhood program you currently provide.
- Give away copies of the guides to the dads you serve our skill-building resources at the tips of their fingers so that they can be great dads.

Download How to Talk with Mom and Child today!



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