

Fact Sheet

A How to....

Communicate With Your Child

- Let the child know you want to talk to them and that you are interested in what they have to say
- Remove any distractions, turn off the television and switch your phone onto silent. Giving them your undivided attention shows that you value what they have to say
- Sit at an equal level. Sitting on the same couch or crouching to their level allows a child to speak more freely as they don't feel like they are being towered over
- Have the conversation in private; don't involve someone else in the conversation unless the child says it's okay
- Don't put the child on the spot; depending on the type of discussion, approach the child at an appropriate time and in an appropriate environment
- Listen actively. Try not to interrupt or correct grammar, it undermines the importance of what the child is saying
- Be honest; if you are aware of a situation let the child know. Playing games often end in time wasting, power plays, mistrust and resentment. Open and honest communication is a two-way street
- If something the child tells you makes you angry take some time to regain control and cool down. Communicating angry does more damage in the long run
- If the child has done something negative let them know that although you didn't like their behavior, they are still a good child and you love/accept them always
- Do not belittle, criticize or insult the child. This not only affects their self-esteem but it can also halt any future communication between you
- Assist the child in seeking solutions to their problems. Advice can be given but encouraging the child to make their own decisions is empowering and improves independence
- Always encourage your child to talk to you. Let them know you are always there to talk if they need to.