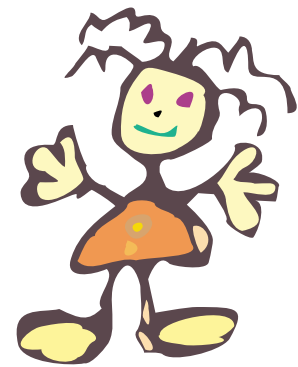


Stop! Look! Listen!

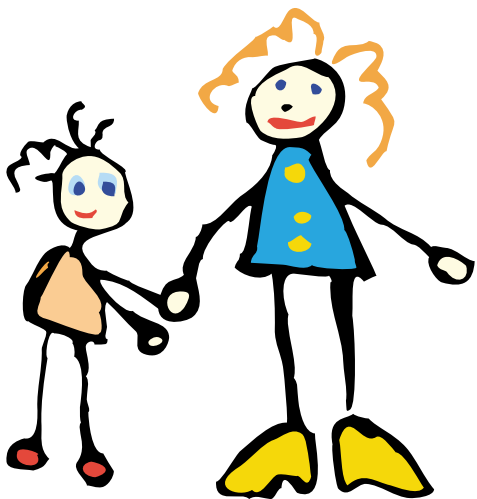
Creative ways to communicate with your children



It's important to know what bothers and upsets your children. Don't wait until you think your child is stressed. Ask them, when things are calm, what they worry about. Then listen very carefully. Try not to finish their sentences or interrupt. Stop, look, and listen!

STOP!

- Some parents find that the best time to talk to their children is when they are doing some everyday activity together, maybe riding on a bus, washing dishes or folding laundry. What times do you find your children open up and want to talk to you? Any quiet time during the day or at bedtime might work.
 - It is important to choose the moment. Find a time when you are relaxed and not feeling rushed and can be together without interruption.
 - Set the climate. You might say, "I know there are things that upset you sometimes. Can you tell me about them." Give your children time to finish what they're saying. Don't interrupt. Encourage them to continue by nodding, and listen to their words and the feeling in the words.

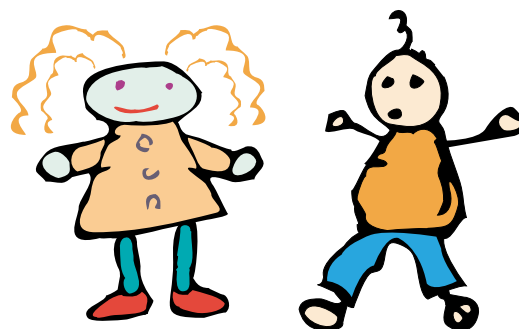


LOOK!

- Once a day, casually check your child's face from the child's level or holding him or her on your lap. When you look into her eyes, does she look back at you or do her eyes dart around? Does her jaw seem tense and tight? Is she smiling and happy? Does she seem relaxed?

LISTEN!

- To show you are really interested in your child and what he is saying, sit facing him and look at his face. Listen without speaking. Nod your head and give other nonverbal encouragement. Remember, the tongue works slower than the mind and it sometimes seems to take forever for a young child to say something. It can take even longer if a child is trying to express something difficult, confusing or upsetting. It is important to give a child time. Don't finish his sentence. Even if you think you know what he is trying to say, give him time to put it into his own words.



www.kidshavestresstoo.org

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