



## The Power of Communication

We've talked about communication numerous times in the past, but this is an important time to cover this topic again. Having open and honest communication with your children is important to their development, self-esteem and sense of well-being. They are exposed to social media and what's going on in the world from many sources. They need to know they can discuss their concerns with you without fear of condemnation or criticism.

**Active Communication** is a five-step process that will help you win your children's cooperation and trust. **Active Communication** works best when you want to work with them to help them solve a problem. These are the five steps to **Active Communication**.

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In these video-based, interactive classes—available 24/7—you'll learn a consistent, encouraging style of parenting that will benefit you and your children for a lifetime. With this self-study course, you have the option of when to participate based on your own schedule and at your convenience. Gain additional insight from your online group leaders as they provide support and feedback.

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Continue your experience as an "active" parent by reviewing what you learn in the class in your accompanying parent guide. Each guide contains additional information, activities, and worksheets to help you practice what you learn.

#### 1. Listen actively.

When you are listening actively, you do more than just receive information; you actively participate in the communication process. You listen with your eyes as well as your ears, so keep them focused on your child. You listen with your intuition as well as your intellect, using all available brainpower to address the situation at hand. The goal of active listening is to encourage them to express what they are thinking and feeling.

#### 2. Listen for feelings.

Your children need to acknowledge and accept their feelings rather than keep them bottled up. Teach them to describe how they feel and then to reflect on these feelings before they decide what action to take. You can help them by not just listening to the content of their stories, but also how they feel. Pay attention to tone of voice, posture, and body language to help determine their state of mind. When you have an idea of what your child is feeling, reflect these feelings back to him or her. Your job is to keep listening, empathizing, and reflecting back those feelings.

#### 3. Look for alternatives and consequences.

Children don't usually spend as much time as adults when evaluating solutions to a problem. A parent's role is to slow them down by helping them look at various options and predict the consequences of their actions. When you help them come up with alternatives, be sure to keep your palms up, to communicate to them that you are listening and open to their ideas.

#### 4. Offer encouragement.

Once your children have a potential solution to the dilemma, a word of encouragement can help them find the courage to put the plan into action. Let them know that you support them and "have their backs."

#### 5. Follow up later.

You and your child can gain a tremendous amount of insight by talking about how his/her situation turned out. First, ask them how they handled the problem, then ask about the results.

**Visit [ACFCcares.com](http://ACFCcares.com) for more information and to start your Active Parenting journey today.**

To learn more about how to encourage your children to be courageous and confident, visit the Active Parenting Online Video Library. These helpful videos are offered free of charge by the ACFC in partnership with Active Parenting. Guidance and help is available for parents of children of all ages, from toddler to teen. To access the Online Video Library, go to the **[ACFC website](#)**, click on the Active Parenting tab, and follow the instructions on how to view the videos.