



Parenting during pandemic

Day 6: Family communication when you're all at home during the pandemic

While we may be at home during the pandemic, there may still be a number of competing demands on our time. One of the main ones could be that everyone at home wants and needs to do different things either at the same or different times and communicating all of this between each other is therefore important to avoid arguments. Here are a few tips that we hope may be helpful:

- Use eye contact and get down to eye level
 - We use eye contact to get people's attention, to let people know who we are speaking to and to signal to each other when we are speaking versus when we expect others to speak. It can be helpful for a child if you use eye contact as it lets them know you are paying attention to what they are saying as this makes them feel valued. If you have something important to talk to your child about, it can be helpful to get down to their eye level and use eye contact so they know it's important. Eye contact is a really social skill so it's very difficult for some people, such as some children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder. If your child or young person has a diagnosis of ASD then miss this tip and try others.
- Limit instructions for attention span
 - Younger children have shorter attention spans so it can be helpful to give clear, concise instructions rather than complex multi-part instructions for which they may lack the attentional capacity.
- Give an instruction and ask the child to repeat it
 - Repetition of instructions strengthens the memory trace for the instructions in our brains. By asking a child to repeat an instruction you have given them, the memory trace may be strengthened and the added benefit is that you can correct any misunderstandings they may have about what they are being asked to do.
- Balancing children of different ages
 - You may be at home with a number of children of different ages and stages. If this is the case, you can ask the older children to help support some of the tasks the younger children need to complete. It will be helpful if everyone thinks they are getting something out of this so you can set it up that older children are demonstrating teaching skills, ability to adapt communication for

- younger children, problem solving skills and so on; while younger children are showing ability to learn from different people and showing respect for others.
- Transitions
 - These can be any times where things change from one activity to another. It can be helpful to think about how schools or nurseries manage these things and what your child's experience has been. For example, you could ask them to teach you the nursery tidy up song or think about extra minutes of choosing time for tidying up for older children.
 - Get children involved in the schedule
 - For most of us, getting involved in something makes us feel invested in it and we are therefore more likely to want to see it go well. For example, if children are involved in setting the daily schedule, they are perhaps more motivated to want to follow it. Writing the schedule means practicing some writing and spelling. Drawing a visual timetable means practicing some art work. Planning the schedule means practicing some planning, organisation and time management skills. All of these things can be helpful for children and young people.

We hope these tips are helpful. Well done on managing another day off school and we hope you will join us again tomorrow.

Tomorrow's topic: Making sure everyone gets enough attention while at home during the COVID-19 pandemic

Please [contact us with questions, comments or topics](#) you'd like to see covered. We'd love to hear your feedback.

Wishing you a safe and healthy path through this pandemic.