



Developing Your Child's Communication Skills

Kimochis™ Key #1

Call someone's name, wait for eye contact, and give a communication tap, if necessary, before you speak

Dear Parents,

Practicing and mastering the habits of good communication will help your child develop positive relationships and move toward academic success. And, like learning how to read and write, becoming fluent with the habits of effective communication can take years to master. Each week, I will provide you with a letter that outlines what your child is learning in our classroom to become an effective communicator and ways your family can continue the conversation and build on these skills.

This week our class opened with the important Key to Communication #1. When we get in the habit of calling someone's name, waiting for eye contact (before speaking) and getting attention with a communication tap on the shoulder (if necessary), we are working to create positive responses. So often, people speak before getting the listener's attention.

Hearing your name helps you feel connected and more receptive to the speaker's message. This is a vital communication habit you will want to model, teach, and coach your child (wait for their eye contact before asking them to clean up their room...see if it works!). The way someone starts a conversation can make or break the message. Key #1 might be one of the most important communication skills your child learns.

Learning does not happen in one lesson or one school year. These communication habits continue to develop over the course of a lifetime. We hope the following suggestions will provide your family worthwhile tips and strategies. When parents and teachers share a common language, it increases the opportunities for your child to practice skills that will help them become a happy, healthy and successful adult.

Thank you for your cooperation.





Tips and Strategies to Try at Home

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Call someone's name, wait for eye contact, and give a communication tap, if necessary, before you speak

Connect with your family at dinner (or anytime you feel your family is ready) to talk about communication. Discuss the questions below that feel right for your family conversation:

- What does communication mean to your family? Just like you talk about the importance of manners, discuss how good communication habits contribute to positive interactions and life success. (We will be learning many more communication habits this year!)
- Invite each family member to share:
 - Why is communication important?
 - How does good communication help with friends, work, and in our community?
 - Name someone you know who is an effective communicator because they make people feel at ease by the **WAY** they communicate?

Communicate with family members to share the habits we practiced this week. Your child learned to call a person's name and get their attention with a gentle tap on the shoulder before speaking. This strategy increases the odds that communication will be successful.

Ask each family member to name a time when they might be busy, but someone in the family wants their attention. For Mom or Dad, it might be when you are on the phone or working on your computer. For the children, it might be when they are playing or reading a good book.

Create practice sessions away from the emotion so your child can rehearse using Key #1 when she/he wants someone's attention. These are the steps:

- Notice that the person might be busy
- Call the person's name and wait for eye contact
- Gently tap the person's shoulder if you did not easily get their attention
- Ask, "Is this a good time to talk?"
- Come back later if that person says, "No" or is busy

Model these steps and then reverse roles. This will give your child immediate practice imitating your helpful communication model.

Commit as a family to practice calling people by name and waiting for eye contact before speaking. At dinner or in causal conversation, share how this habit makes a positive and valuable difference in communication interactions.

