



## Developing Your Child's Communication Skills

### Kimochis™ Key #2

Using a talking tone of voice instead of a fighting tone of voice

Dear Parents,

This week's communication lesson made students aware of the importance of volume and tone of voice to the meaning of a message. When one is feeling emotional, it is easy to increase the volume and use a tone that is not easy for others to hear. Therefore, our class learned about Key #2. Anyone can use this reminder to develop their awareness about the way we might sound. With awareness, we have the opportunity to be brave and re-do moments when we are not proud of the way we sounded.

While verbal and written communication skills are important, nonverbal behaviors make up a large part of our daily interpersonal communication. In fact, here are the numbers: tone of voice=30%, body language=60%, and words=10%. Therefore, it is vital for your child to understand and master Key #2. The way your child uses their tone of voice when they feel upset can make a social situation better or worse. Remind your child about this concept and ask, "*Will that voice make your problem bigger or smaller?*" Model using a talking tone of voice and make a point of re-doing moments when you hear that you lost your cool. For example, "*I need to start again. There is no reason I need to yell.*"

Often, we do not "hear" when we use a fighting tone of voice. The suggestions on the next page will provide your family with talking points and skills that will help everyone become more aware of their tone of voice and volume in social situations. Because it is hard to use a calm tone of voice when expressing upset feelings, make a family commitment to simply do one's best. Show your child how to be brave and "catch yourself" (or notice) and re-do those moments you could have spoken with more care.

Thanks for your cooperation.





## Tips and Strategies to Try at Home

### Kimochis™ Key #2

Using a talking tone of voice instead of a fighting tone of voice

**Connect** with your family at dinner (or anytime you feel your family is ready to connect) to highlight the importance of tone of voice. Consider and discuss the talking points below:

- Ask your child to share the difference between a talking and fighting voice.
- Take turns asking for various items at the table using a talking or fighting voice. Family members try to guess which voice was used.
- Invite each family member to share:
  - Who do they admire that can maintain a calm tone of voice even when upset?
  - What makes it challenging to not yell when feeling upset?
  - Are there certain people, situations or feelings that make it more challenging to use a talking voice? (For example, we can honor that it may be more challenging to speak calmly to your siblings than to your friends.)
- Create a family secret signal to let each other know in a shame-free way to re-do the moment using a talking voice (No questions asked!).

**Communicate** with family members to:

- Appreciate one another and name what you admire about the way each family member uses their tone of voice when upset. For example, “I really appreciated that when you were yelling, you tried to stop and start again.”
- Ask each family member to choose a predictable situation in which they might lose their cool. Everyone will try to use a talking tone when that situation occurs. Loop back in future family discussions to check in with one another to learn how each family member is succeeding with their personal challenge. Explore how to support each other.

**Create** practice sessions away from the emotion so your child can rehearse using Key #2. Model the strategies and reverse roles to give your child a chance to imitate your model.

- Identify a situation where it can be challenging to talk calmly.
- Create a role-play to practice using a talking voice in this situation.
- Create a role-play and use a fighting voice, but quickly catch yourself and re-do the moment. Say, “Sorry I yelled. Let me start again.”

**Commit** as a family to practice using a talking voice even when really, really upset. Agree that everyone will give gentle reminders (the secret signal) to help each another.

- Before a possible challenging moment, remind yourself or each other that using a talking tone may be hard.
- By predicting and planning for challenging moments, you raise the odds that family members can successfully monitor their tone of voice
- Periodically appreciate each another for efforts.
- Share how you feel about gaining control when upset. The more you talk about how you communicate, the more your child will learn what helps everyone do their best!

