

Some Guidelines to communicate well with kids.

Make sense, be clear, tell the truth and be vulnerable.

Never underestimate the value and power of conversation. Engage kids in conversation and you have the foundation for a positive relationship.

Do not talk to kids as if they are your peers.

Ask questions only when you need specific information. Make statements instead. This invites communication and allows kids to choose whether or not to engage in conversation.

Talking while doing is better than just talking. Dialogue improves when you do things together. When the doing is fun, the relationship becomes special.

Use the language of feelings. Your feelings described in a simple manner helps kids learn to express themselves. Your willingness to expose emotion provides an opportunity to connect. Feelings and laughter promote communication.

Don't speak in anger – report anger. “I was angry...: That is a statement of feelings. Separate feeling states from content and causes. Otherwise damaging messages are said in anger and can have far reaching consequences. Speaking *in anger* is not a good choice. Reporting anger will communicate your concerns without saying something potentially damaging.

Speak less, listen more.

Adapted from *How to Create Positive Relationships with Students*, Michelle Karns 1994.