

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CHILD

Individual, Dyadic, or Group Writing Exercise

USE THIS EXERCISE TO BUILD:



Nurturing
Parent-Child
Interactions



Safer and
More Stable
Conditions



Social and
Emotional
Abilities

PURPOSE

Communication between parents and children can be a challenge, especially during times of high stress or conflict. This activity provides space for parents to reflect on times when they have successfully communicated with their kids in positive ways, and share those strategies with each other.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY LENGTH: 1 HOUR

10 minutes for instructions | 20 minutes for writing | 30 minutes for group reflection

MATERIALS

Paper or a journal

Items to write with, like pencils or pens

Notes for the facilitator

- Think about ways to normalize the challenges that may arise when parenting under stressful circumstances.
- Particularly for facilitators that don't have children, framing is especially important.
- Stay away from instructing parents on how to parent.

When using this activity with children:

- Consider age (recommended range: 6–18 years old)
- Remember that changing the way we communicate and interact with each other takes time and consistency. We're not always going to get it right, and that's ok.



HOW TO FACILITATE THIS EXERCISE

- 1** Begin with individual reflection. Ask the parents to do the following:
Think about how you communicate with your child. How does that usually go for you? What makes it hard? What makes it easier? The circumstances will be different for each person.
- 2** Follow with group sharing:
Share a story about a time when you felt you were really successful communicating with your child. What were the circumstances? How did you make that happen?
- 3** After parents have shared, ask the group what circumstances and strategies they heard from other parents that helped them communicate with their children.
- 4** Write those down somewhere that everyone can see them together. Use this list to facilitate the reflection questions.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What was a strategy you heard from another parent that resonated?
- What might be challenging about these strategies?
- What might they gain from incorporating these strategies?
- How did it feel to have this conversation with other parents versus (judge, child welfare worker, etc.)?
- Would it be helpful to talk about these strategies next time?