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Tips for Talking with Children

by Storyteller Uncle Mark Jeffers



1. Crouch or sit at the child's eye level
Helps to minimize the physical and social differences between adult and child.

2. Show attention physically as well as verbally

Use eye contact, smiles, nods, a gentle hand on a shoulder or back.

3. Take turns and participate

Make sure you are having a conversation.

4. Read nonverbal communication

Notice and put into words what you see the child feeling and thinking... "It's a little scary", "You're really happy".

5. Respect the child's language

Try not to correct the child's speech or their ideas. Say "Show me", or "Tell me more about that".

6. Listen

Focus on what the child says. Ask clarifying questions, help the child to extend their ideas.

7. Select what to say carefully

Make what you say brief and to the point. Use words that are simple, new and interesting.

8. Remember, it's not a quiz or a lecture

Questions can be conversation stoppers. Say simple things: "I like to do that too", "I didn't know that".

Taken from 'Who Am I In the Lives of Children'
An Introduction to Early Childhood Education 2009 pg. 334

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