



FROM YOUR CFS **Wellness Specialist**



Helping Kids Communicate and Connect

From the earliest days of creation, God has been a big fan of human connection (Genesis 2:18). Strong communication skills are vital for both adults and kids as they build healthy relationships. These skills include: listening, expressing thoughts in verbal and nonverbal ways, and being aware of body language cues.

Not surprisingly, kids' greatest lessons on communication and connection start in the home. Babies begin hearing while still in the womb. Newborns take in messages from parents' facial expressions, tone of voice, and responsiveness. As children grow, they continue watching, listening, and experiencing (and ultimately mimicking!) the communication patterns they see modeled every day.

Because of this, everyday moments at home become powerful opportunities to shape how children connect with others. So how can we intentionally build strong communication skills in our kids?

Model active listening. When your child is speaking, give them your attention. Set your phone aside. Make eye contact, nod, reflect what they're saying, and let them finish. If you're unable to listen in the moment, calmly set a time to come back to the conversation. Ultimately, modeling how we listen to God's Word, and respond in obedience, is the most important lesson (Romans 10:17).

Build kids' expressive vocabularies. A strong vocabulary helps children clearly express their thoughts and feelings. Point out descriptive words in everyday life and help kids name their emotions (frustrated vs. angry; happy vs. overjoyed). Also be mindful that the language used at home becomes part of a child's "word bank." Some words are best left out (Colossians 3:8).

Monitor tone and body language. Communication is about more than words. Help kids match their tone, volume, facial expressions, and body language to the message they're trying to share. You can even make this fun by playing games where words and tone don't match, then discussing what would communicate more clearly. Be aware that sarcasm, criticism, or negativity in our own communication will naturally carry over into our children's interactions. If comments are often followed by, "I was just kidding," it may be a sign to shift toward more encouraging and life-giving words. Scripture reminds us to "encourage one another and build each other up" (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

As children grow in these skills, they often experience greater success socially and academically, along with increased confidence in their relationships. Even more importantly, those same skills equip them to share the love of Jesus with others, speaking truth with clarity, kindness, and grace.