EFFECTIVE WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• Discuss the influencing factors on a child's behavior

• Address the role of working parents and their experience

• Identify ways in which parents can support appropriate childhood development

• Review tips for effective communication
INFLUENCING FACTORS

- Biological
- Social
- Emotional
- The home

(Lewis, 2011)
OUR ROLE AS PARENTS...

IN EVERYDAY LIFE
• Tackling the working parent's life conundrum

• Working parent's guilt

Guilt felt by a parent at any time they are away from their children, that does not involve their children, or when they take time for themselves

Traditionally seen to affect more women than men

(Poduval & Poduval, 2009; Tedeschi, 2015)
• These are additional stressors working mothers face:
  • Observers may label you as selfish, or not "maternal."
  • Effects to your child's development.
  • Changes that occur at work.

• Don't give up, keep going, and, to avoid any scrutiny, remind yourself why you're doing this:
  • You put yourself out there for your children.
  • You need to look after your own wellbeing.

(Handbagsintheboardroom.com, 2013; Poduval & Poduval, 2009; Tedeschi, 2015)
CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

- Your baby and children are going to develop fine:
  - Baby's motor development was positively correlated to the number of hours a mother was employed.
  - Adolescents or young teenagers were found to experience statistically less psychological distress.

- Employed mothers lead to
  - more positive representation in the workforce
  - fewer role conflicts
  - better self-worth
  - improved family income
  - better structure for family routine

(Handbagsintheboardroom.com, 2013; Poduval & Poduval, 2009)
1. If you're annoyed, they're annoyed.
2. Accept that going back to work requires compromise and trade-offs.
3. Don't "should" yourself. Should statements are crippling.
   • Switch "should" to "can" or "could" statements.
4. Lower the bar to being "good enough."
   • You do not have to be a perfect parent to be a good parent.
5. Refuse to buy into guilt mongers.
   • Take things with a grain of salt.

(Handbagsintheboardroom.com, 2013; Warrell, 2013)
TIPS FOR COPING WITH GUILT AND BEING A BETTER PARENT

7. When with kids, don't be distracted.
8. What does being a great parent mean to you?
9. Ask your children what they want from you as their parent.
10. Dedicate "fun time" with your children.
11. Schedule "me" time.

(Handbagsintheboardroom.com, 2013; Warrell, 2013)
• Set the stage early for open, effective communication.

• Demonstrate your love and acceptance of them.

• Use gestures, facial expressions, and other nonverbal behaviors.

• Use age-appropriate language.

• Make eye contact when possible.
USE QUESTIONS AND LEARN TO LISTEN

Ask open-ended questions:
- What...?
- Where...?
- Whom...?
- How...?

Try to avoid "yes" or "no" questions. Choose your questions carefully:
- Make and maintain eye contact.
- Get rid of distractions.
- Keep interruptions to a minimum.
- Let them know they've been heard.
GUIDELINES FOR LISTENING: ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

1. Be attentive.
2. Ask open-ended questions.
3. Ask probing questions.
4. Request clarification.
5. Paraphrase.
6. Be attuned to and reflect feelings.
7. Summarize.

Listening with Empathy
TIMING

• Pass on information a little at a time.

• Speak for 30 seconds, then ask for comments.

• Look for clues that your child has had enough.

• Consider using regular talking opportunities.

• Give everyone a time to have their say.
Always complete your explanation

• Give as much information as your child needs.

• Make sure that the information given is age appropriate.

• Encourage children to ask questions.

• Show them that you are human.

• Teach children how to find out information on their own.
• Work on one problem at a time.

• Be creative in problem-solving.

• Be polite.

• Use "I" messages.

• Be willing to forgive.
AVOID NEGATIVE COMMUNICATION

- Nagging/lecturing
- Interrupting
- Criticizing
- Dwelling on the past
- Using guilt to control your child
- Using sarcasm
- Telling them how to do it
- Putting children down
- Using threats
- Lying
- Denying their feelings
Use these openers:

- "I'd like to talk about it."
- "Tell me more about that."
- "Go ahead, I'm listening."
- "I understand."
- "What do you think about...?"
- "Would you like to talk about it?"
- "Is there anything else you'd like to talk about?"
- "That's interesting."
- "Wow!"
- "I'm interested."
- "Explain that to me."
- "I hear you."
BUILDING EFFECTIVE FAMILY COMMUNICATION

- Communicate frequently.
- Communicate clearly and directly.
- Be an active listener.
- Think about who you are communicating with.
- Pay attention.
- Be positive.
FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE
CONTACT YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)