

## Newsletter Item 6

Aim: To provide families with tips to communicate more effectively with their children about bullying

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### Communicating Effectively With Your Children

It is important to discuss bullying with your children on a regular basis. Regular communication with a person they trust and respect will help them form their own opinions and beliefs about bullying. Your children will also feel more comfortable telling you if they are being bullied.

Consider trying some of these ideas to improve the way you talk with your children about tricky issues.

#### **Sit shoulder to shoulder or walk with your child as you talk.**

- Talking face to face can be quite confrontational, particularly for boys. Sitting or walking side by side will encourage both you and your child to talk freely.

#### **Use open-ended questions.**

- It is easy to ask your child if he or she had a good day or if he or she would like toast for breakfast; however, these questions only require a *yes* or *no* answer.
- Try asking questions such as “What did you do today?” or “What would you like for breakfast?” These types of questions encourage discussion between you and your child.

#### **Talk with your children about what to do rather than what not to do.**

- It is common for us to focus on negative behavior, for example, by saying, “Don’t step in that puddle,” or “Stop rocking your chair.”
- Try telling your children what you would like them to do rather than what you don’t want them to do.
- You can do this by using positive statements such as, “Please step over the puddle,” or “Please put the chair legs on the floor.”