

TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD.

- **HOW** we talk to our children is really important. When we fail to show respect and speak in an annoyed, impatient or angry way it has a negative affect on children. Its important to reflect and think about how we talk to our children and the tone of voice we use towards them. Are we just instructing them and correcting them?
- **When someone uses the work 'you' a lot in an aggressive tone of voice** we can be pretty sure they are in a negative, blaming mood, putting people down and discouraging them. We need to remember that small children cannot understand or cope with raw adult emotions.
- Some 'you messages' may include words like stupid, bad, stubborn, selfish etc. These names can stick and may influence a child's thinking -sometimes for life.
- One thing that helps is to **correct the 'behaviour' but not the person**. Its better to say 'that was a naughty thing to do' rather than you're a naughty boy'. Its best to tell your child exactly what behaviour you didn't like and not to use labels like 'naughty' or 'stupid' at all.
- Most 'you' messages are unhelpful because **they blame or attack the person rather than the behaviour'**
- Communicating how we feel to our children can often help us to prevent difficult situations and increase closeness.
- It helps to use the word 'I' or 'me' instead of 'you'. E.g. 'I'm annoyed you....', 'I need you to be quiet / I need a rest', 'that helped me thanks'.
- Psychologists observing parents communicating with small children recorded the number of corrections, accusations, instructions, threats, warnings and put downs they heard and the number of friendly comments. They found very few friendly comments. Their conclusion was that even when parents are not speaking disrespectfully to their children, there is still a serious lack of positive communication in what is being spoken.

PLANNING AND SKILL PRACTICE: What is your worst time of day for shouting at the children and getting angry? Think what might help, Getting up earlier, thinking ahead.
How will you speak more respectfully to your children next week? Plan some time to talk. Try the 'I' messages.