



EPRESS

Questions from Directors

What in the world do I do when my clients won't pay their visitation fees? No one but me seems concerned about this. How can we keep working if we don't get paid?

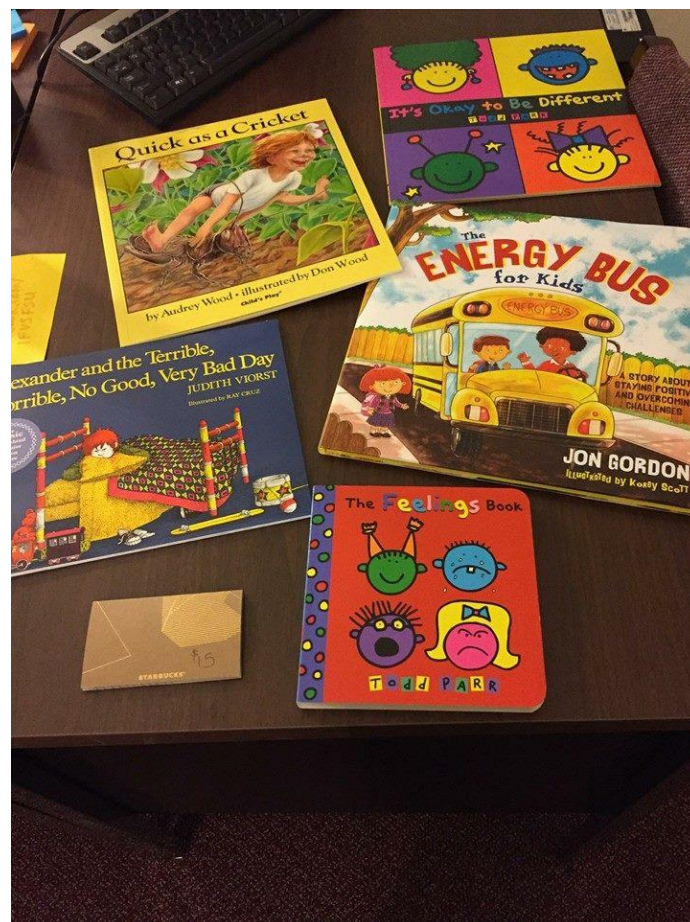
This is a tougher issue than it should be. If you are having trouble getting your visit bills paid by clients, there has to be some recourse. I have always recommended going back to the judge for help, and now I think that two things need to be changed: first is the Letter of Agreement with the Court. If your judges support you, they will understand that you need to add a provision that states: "The program is partially fee-based, and although we make every effort to accommodate clients, if they do not pay their fees, they will not be eligible to use the program." After hearing about programs being forced to accept clients who have been discharged from the program, I recommend that the Client Letter of Agreement notes that the program director retains discretion to accept, terminate, and reject cases. Over the years, the biggest problems experienced by program have resulted in confusing or unclear rules, policies, and procedures. If you are clear at the beginning, you always have a neutral policy to point to.

We have a case that includes two children, but only one has to visit the father. The teenager was allowed to refuse to visit. The younger child has good visits, but the father has said at the end of the visit "Goodbye Jonny, and tell Larry I wish he'd come too." Should we allow this?

Talk to the Dad and explain to him that using Johnny to send messages to Larry won't work, and will only make Johnny feel bad. Explain instead that the likelier scenario is that if Johnny has a good visit, Larry will see him

happy and looking forward to the visits, and may want to see his father, too. I advise against allowing this messaging behavior to continue, though, even if Larry doesn't start joining the visits. If he does, be sure to have him included in the order and agreement. We are trying to establish a strong relationship between the father and Johnny. Remind the father to focus on that while he is with his younger son at your program. It's not a perfect solution, but it may be the best you can offer.

The Clearinghouse Social/Emotional Learning Challenge



We have been training supervised visitation staff on the importance of social/emotional learning for several months. You have received a variety of tools to use and activities to promote at visits. Now we ask

that you put those skills into use at your program. When you do teach clients about identifying or managing their emotions, let us know! We are having a drawing in April at the phone conference for free books and a gift certificate. Email Karen at koehme@fsu.edu with the names of your program and staff who participate in this challenge!

How to Give Children Clear Directions

By Jo'Anna Clayton

The words parents use to give directions can sometimes confuse children, often causing leading to child misbehavior, simply due to not understanding rules or directions. This misbehavior can lead to fighting, power struggles, and unhealthy, negative relationships between parents and their children. Parents can alleviate this issue by giving clear, simple directions that children can understand. This E-Press will provide tips for parents on how to provide clear directions for their children, which helps to foster cooperative children and strong parent-child bonds. As supervised visitation providers, you can pass this information along to your clients or print it out and give it to parents as a helpful guide.

The Importance of Clear Directions

Simple directions help children to understand what is expected of them, helping to limit misbehavior in the future by giving children the opportunity to fully understand the task presented to them.



The most important factor predicting a child following directions is the presence of a healthy parent-child relationship. Without a healthy, positive relationship, children may choose to disobey directions they understand perfectly, so this is an essential first step in the process. Once a healthy relationship has been established, giving simple directions with support and encouragement will be the key to children

successfully obeying rules and guidelines, completing chores and tasks efficiently, and communicating effectively with parents.

Tips for Giving Clear Directions Your Child

- **Make sure that your child is listening carefully**, as missing a few key words, such as “not” or “if” could result in your child acting against your instructions.
- **Be precise about the task at hand**, so that your child will understand fully what it is that he or she needs to do to meet your expectations. Children are often confused by general concepts, but when given specific information and tasks, usually perform well.
- **Ask your child to repeat the directions back to you**, in order to clarify your child’s understanding of your instructions.
 - Example: Annie’s mother asks her to have her room cleaned by 12pm, she can’t tell if Annie is listening. Annie’s mother could ask her, “Annie, what was it that I just asked you to do?” If Annie isn’t sure about the instructions, this gives Annie’s mom an opportunity to clarify the task at hand. She can show Annie a clock, or even write the time down on paper.
- **Allow your child to ask questions** immediately after you give him or her the directions before incorrect views can be solidified, as well as during the task, if the child needs continuing help or support. If your child asks questions, you can view that as a sign that he or she wants to perform the tasks you have given him or her, but is simply confused.
- **Give one direction at a time**. A child’s brain works at a different pace from adults, and many children have yet to develop the ability to multi-task effectively. Giving one direction at a time helps to limit confusion and promote the child’s ability to complete the task.



- **Model good listening skills and a positive attitude**, in order for your child to understand and complete the task you have given him or her. A child learns how to act from modeling others' behaviors, especially his or her parent's behaviors. If you give simple directions to a child, but in a negative, mean, or harsh way, children may not want to comply or may act negatively when completing the task at hand.

Benefits of Giving Clear Directions to Children

Giving clear directions has many benefits for both you and your children. It can lead to:

- Cooperative children
- Healthier parent-child relationships
- Development of strong listening and communication skills
- A sense of stability and trust due to set expectations
- Lowered power struggles
- Decreased family conflict



Conclusion

You, as a supervised visitation provider, can give this information to parents to help them give clear directions, which can lead to many positive benefits for families. Putting the effort into making directions simple and clear for children helps to foster understanding and communication skills, while limiting conflict. Clear directions can lead to happier, healthier family dynamics.

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10 Ways to Deal with Anger

By Jerry Kivett

Introduction:

Everyone gets angry sometimes, and this anger can often become overwhelming and hard to handle in certain situations. This article presents ten simple ways to deal with anger by better handling frustrating situations. This is helpful information for supervised visitation providers to use in professional situations that may be frustrating or to discuss with or hand out to parents as tips to deal with their anger. We all get upset at times, but this resource can aid you, as a supervised visitation provider, in managing your own anger and in providing support to parents struggling with anger.



10 Tips to Deal with Anger:

1. **Look up.** When we are experiencing negative emotions, one of the quickest ways to change our emotional state is to change our physical position. Often when we are angry, we look down towards the ground. Simply looking directly up can help shift a negative mood to a more positive one. Other small physical changes can have a similar effect. For example, getting up and walking to a window, making an exaggerated facial expression, or doing a dance move can help calm you down.
2. **Think before you speak.** Anger often gets us into trouble by causing us to say hurtful or mean things in the heat of the moment that only make the situation worse. When you feel yourself getting angry, try to take a deep breath and calm down. Once you are calmer, you are more capable of clearly and effectively expressing your anger.
3. **Take a time out.** If you are still upset after taking a deep breath, it may be necessary to remove yourself from the situation, at least briefly. Take a moment to yourself to calm down, determine what is making you angry, and decide what exactly it is that you need or want out of the situation. This will allow you to approach the situation more calmly once you return.



4. Practice relaxation techniques.

Relaxing looks differently to every individual. Some common techniques include praying, meditating, listening to music, and doing yoga. Any activity that helps you feel more relaxed and at peace can assist in decreasing anger. Simply imagining peaceful scenery or images can also be very relaxing.

5. Exercise. Exercising promotes positive physical health and releases endorphins in the brain that keep us naturally more positive and happy. A regular exercise routine that works for you can greatly reduce a temper and make you feel more positive in general.

6. Sleep and eat well. A regular sleep schedule and healthy diet are also important aspects of maintaining positive physical health, which can lead to a more positive attitude as well. Not getting enough sleep can cause us to feel grumpy and be

short with others. Aim to get at least eight hours of sleep each night, and make it a priority to go to bed around the same time each night if possible. Also, strive to eat mainly healthy meals cooked at home and avoid going out to eat too much (especially fast food).

- 7. Think Positive.** This may sound simple, but trying to think more positively in a situation that is making you feel angry or upset can be worthwhile. Try to avoid negative words such as “Don’t,” “Not,” and “No”. Look for a “silver lining” or something to be learned from the situation. Depending on the situation, it may be appropriate to find something to laugh about within or outside of the current context. Laughter can help stimulate positivity and end your negative emotional state.
- 8. Identify and Eliminate Triggers.** There are specific situations that upset or bother each of us as individuals. It is important to identify the individual triggers that make you personally angry. Then you can find your own way to deal with this particular situation by trying out different coping methods. Seek closure with the situation or behavior that upsets you in order to address it and eliminate the anger you feel towards it.
- 9. Talk to a Support System.** When something is upsetting you, talking to a friend or family member to “vent” can help relieve anger. Identify supportive individuals

who are reliable, willing to listen to you, and are not directly involved in the situation. Simply having someone listen to you can reduce anger by allowing you to process your feelings out loud.

10. Ask for help when necessary. All of these tips can help with general anger that we all experience, but some situations may be more extreme. If the rest of these tips do not seem to be helping with anger, you are still feeling angry constantly, or you are becoming increasingly upset and volatile, professional help may be more appropriate to help you. If these strategies are not working and you are feeling unable to control your anger, recognize that you may need professional help such as anger management or another form of therapy. This is a key distinction to make because some individuals' anger is more extreme than these tips are designed for and a professional needs to intervene.



Resources:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/adult-health/in-depth/anger-management/art-20045434?pg=1>

<http://thinksimplenow.com/happiness/15-simple-ways-to-overcome-anger>

Teaching Children Communication

By Kayla Kirk

Introduction

Communication skills are vital for adults and children. Studies show that effective communicators are happier, achieve more in school settings, and are more successful overall. Teaching children good communication skills starts immediately and lasts

throughout their childhood and adolescence. At different stages of childhood, different skills should be developed. The ultimate goal is to raise an individual who converses courteously, listens to what others say, and is able to clearly express his or her own thoughts, ideas, and opinions. As a supervised visitation provider, you can provide this information to your clients verbally or print it out and give the information to them as a resource.

This E-Press covers:

- Basic communication practices to teach children, by age group
- Different stages of child communication development
- How to teach children communication skills at each development stage
- Activities to teach children communication skills

Basic Communication Practices

There are a number of things you should do to help facilitate communication in your child. The practices mentioned below can be used with all development stages.

- **Actively listen to your child.** When you show your child how to listen, demonstrates that you are paying attention to them by listening is important and courteous.
- **Get on your child's level.** Getting on your child's level will facilitate good eye contact. Eye contact is important because it is a non-verbal way to communicate with someone that helps to show your interest in what is being shared.
- **Display signs of verbal and nonverbal listening.** When your children speak to you, not only can you verbally acknowledge what they say by using encouragers such as "yes," and "mhmm," but you can also nod your head and react to what they say with facial expressions.
- **Use "I" statements to communicate how you think and feel.** Start your sentences with "I" instead of "you" to relate what you are thinking. This will teach children how to speak in a direct way to others about their thoughts and reactions.
- **Ask probing questions to encourage your child to engage in open communication.** By asking probing questions, such as, "You look upset. Is it because of the thunderstorm and you can't go outside?" your child will learn to communicate more often and new conversation topics can be covered.
- **Teach your child not to interrupt when someone else is speaking.** Tell your child that allowing others to speak fully and express opinions without being disrupted is courteous. If your child interrupts you, calmly and politely tell him or her not to and explain how this can be a distraction to the person who had first

been speaking. Also, don't interrupt your child either so that you can model this behavior for him or her.

Babies and Toddlers- Birth to Age Three



Language development accelerates between birth and a child's third birthday. Infants communicate from birth, through sounds (crying, cooing, squealing), facial expressions (eye contact, smiling, grimacing), and gestures (moving legs in excitement or distress). Babies continue to develop communication skills when adults respond to their efforts. From about one to two, children will learn fragments of words and echo what they hear. They may point to something familiar and say its name and often times, they can connect names to familiar faces.

Gestures are a very important part of communication, particularly at this age when language development is minimal. You can make connections with the child by using gestures and language with running commentary. For example, the infant is pointing to the fridge. "Do you want a drink? Do

you want milk? I'll get you some milk. Here is your drink of milk." By using a running commentary to explain the child's actions, the child will learn words for his or her gestures and will begin to comprehend the meaning of the gestures. Providing comments on gestures also encourages children to respond and participate in communication.

Once a toddler, the child will start to consistently say words correctly. The child will learn the correct pronunciation and not struggle as much with language. At this age, speak to children slowly and clearly. Employ simple language so that the toddler will be able to understand. Emphasize correct pronunciation, even if the child still lacks the ability to say the word correctly.

Below is the typical progression of language milestones for this age group. If you believe your child is falling behind, report your concerns to a doctor.

- 15-18 Months: The child will be able to say several words.

- 18 Months: The child will point to things and know the names of familiar objects.
- 2 Years Old: The child will be able to say 50 or more words and can put two words together to form a small sentence.
- 2 Years or Older: This age child will be able to follow two-step commands.

Preschool Age –Three to Five Years of Age

At this stage, children begin to use more complicated sentences. “No” and “why” typically become very popular words. “No” is used to show individuality and “why” is used to question the confusing adults and world surrounding the child. Children at this age like to participate in decisions, so make sure to ask them questions about what they would like to happen when possible so that they feel included.



This age group will imitate the words you use, so it is a great time to incorporate new vocabulary. A child may be repetitive, describing the same event over and over, due to trying to understand what he or she experienced. When preschool-age children use repetition, ask questions and respond to what they are saying. Get on their physical level and make eye contact so that they feel understood. Also at this age, children talk through their bodies, play, and art. You can learn just as much about what they are communicating by watching them as you do through talking to them. Activities you can use to facilitate learning communication skills with this age child include playing pretend with the child, communicating with dolls or action figures, and reading together.

School Age –Six to Twelve Years of Age



At this time, children begin to speak in a more mature fashion. They want their growth and maturity to be acknowledged and no longer want to be talked down to or treated as a baby. The best way to communicate with children at this age is to ask specific, open-ended questions. Instead of asking, “How was school?” ask “What feedback did your teacher give you on your assignment?” Employing specifically targeted, open-ended questions will usually lead to the child communicating more directly, rather than responding with short, vague answers. It is also helpful to repeat what a child says to ensure that you understand what the child is trying to say. When repeating what the child says, you can do it in a more mature manner so that they can learn from you. This is about the time that children begin to give presentations at school, so help your child prepare by working on eye contact and vocabulary together. At this age, you can facilitate learning by reading together, asking about details from school, and respecting your child’s wish to communicate more like an adult.

Teenagers- Thirteen to Eighteen Years of Age

When your child becomes a teenager or adolescent, teaching communication skills becomes more advanced. It can be challenging because many teens communicate through text, email, instant messenger, and social media.



At this age, it is vital they understand rhythm and tone of speech, body language, and different communication styles.

- **Rhythm and Tone of Speech:** Rhythm involves the speed and frequency of speech. Teach your teenager that talking too quickly can limit others from understanding the communication efforts. Similarly, speaking too slowly or using filler words such as “um” and “like” can lead to distractions and misunderstandings for the listener. The tone of speech is also critical, as it can translate how someone feels or what the individual thinks about what he or she is saying. If your teenager frequently uses a sarcastic tone, particularly with individuals who do not use sarcasm, others might believe that he or she is rude or unfriendly.
- **Body Language:** Body language is another method people use to help identify how someone thinks or feels. Explain to your teenager that slouching, yawning, or fidgeting can appear as effects of boredom. Crossing arms, rolling eyes, or avoiding eye contact can also often appear rude and distant. Teach your teenager how to sit and stand in a relaxed and approachable way that indicates his or her feelings of eagerness, interest, and openness to communication.
- **Communication Style:** There are three types of communication styles: passive, assertive, and aggressive. Passive communication involves apologizing, not speaking real thoughts or feelings, and being hesitant or indirect. Assertive communication involves being confident, respecting others, and speaking real

thoughts and feelings openly. Aggressive communication is often described as domineering, abrasive, or bossy. Explain to your teenager that being assertive is the best way to talk to others because it shows respect but also allows for real thoughts to be expressed. Being passive or aggressive can make others uncomfortable and lead to unhealthy modes of communication.

Teenagers will have many of the basics of communication down by now. At this point, fine-tuning skills and developing more advanced communication styles are often the focal points of communication development. The way adolescents learn to talk and listen during their teenage years will translate into how they communicate as an adult.

Activities for Each Age Group



Below are names and descriptions of different activities you can use with your child to facilitate communication skills, broken down by the different developmental stages.

Infants

Mimicking Sounds: It has been shown that repeating basic sounds and words to your infant helps with language development. When your child makes a sound, repeat it.

Repeat sounds back and forth frequently and consistently to help develop motor skills. Give them praise and show how happy you are when the child repeats you.

Preschool Age

Co-create a Story: You start off a story and have your child finish it. For very young children, you can tell them a nursery rhyme and have them make up an alternate ending or add on to the story. You could make it more difficult by switching off speaking one



sentence and continuing the story in that manner. This exercise is great for teaching beginning verbal communication skills.

School Age

Telephone: This old elementary school game is a fun way to develop your child's listening skills. One participant starts by whispering a sentence into the closest person's ear. Next, that person will whisper what he or she heard to the next neighbor, and so on and so forth. The last person to get the message repeats it aloud for the group to hear. How similar was it to the original message? The better the listener, the more correct the sentence will be. Begin with a simpler message for younger children and gradually increase the size and complexity as they get older.

Teenagers

Role Plays: Give your child a situation and have them act it out in each of the three communication styles (passive, assertive, aggressive). Ask which one the child thinks was the most effective for the situation and give guidance so that the child realizes how he or she interacts with others.

Um Contest: Have your teenager talk about a familiar topic, such as his or her favorite activity, movie, or sport. See how long he or she can keep from uttering “um,” “er,” “uh,” “like,” or “ya’ know” while describing the topic. This develops the child’s confidence, as well as eloquence of speaking. Eliminating these filler words will allow your teenager to focus on becoming more articulate and increasing his or her vocabulary.

Conclusion

Teaching communication can begin immediately and is a process that continues into adulthood. Giving your children lessons and practice on the correct basics of communication will help them as they get older. Being a good communicator will help them in relationships and career success as an adult. Communication is a vital skill in understanding others and being understood.

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Core Principals of Trauma-Informed Care

By Kayla Kirk

Introduction

Understanding the effects of trauma on individuals, groups, and communities is a key factor in delivering effective services. As a supervised visitation monitor,



you will work with many children and families who have suffered some sort of trauma. Supervised visitation professionals who interact with clients who have experienced trauma should be understanding and sensitive to those experiences. Visitation providers should be knowledgeable about the individual's history in order to know how to properly empathize and respond to him or her. This Epress will cover:

- What trauma is and how it affects people
- What trauma-informed care is and how it is essential
- The core principals of trauma-informed care

What is Trauma?

The term "trauma" refers to experiences that cause intense physical and psychological stress reactions. It can refer to a single event, multiple events, or a set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. Below are several types of traumatic events, although it is not an all-inclusive list, as trauma differs for every individual.

- Experiencing or witnessing interpersonal violence (domestic violence, child abuse)
- Physical, sexual, or institutional abuse or neglect
- War, terrorism, or natural disasters
- Stigmatization due to gender, race, poverty, sexual orientation, or incarceration



It is estimated that 61% of men and 51% of women will experience at least one lifetime traumatic event.

Trauma overwhelms one's ability to cope and deal with everyday stressors and activities. Individuals who have

experienced a trauma will fall within a continuum from feeling overwhelmed to overcoming the trauma. As a supervised visitation monitor, many times when you first begin working with a family, they will be on the overwhelmed side of the continuum. Hopefully, towards the end of your time with the family, they will have moved to the overcoming side of the trauma continuum, indicating the processing of the trauma and the development of coping skills.

Background Information on Trauma-Informed Care



Trauma-informed care is a strengths-based service delivery approach that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma. It emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and thus creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment in their lives.

A trauma-informed approach to the delivery of behavioral health services includes an understanding of trauma and an awareness of the impact it can have across settings, services, and populations. It involves viewing trauma through an ecological and cultural lens and recognizing that context plays a significant role in how individuals perceive and process traumatic events. It involves four key elements of a trauma-informed approach:

1. Realizing the prevalence of trauma
2. Recognizing how trauma affects all individuals involved with the program, organization, or system, including its own workforce
3. Responding by putting this knowledge into practice; and

4. Resisting retraumatization

A more extensive background about trauma-informed care can be found in the December 2012 Epress entitled “Trauma Informed Care 101.”

The Core Principals

There are six core principals of trauma-informed care to work towards achieving and maintaining. They are listed and explained below.



1. **Safety:** Throughout the organization, the staff and the people they serve feel physically and psychologically safe.
2. **Trustworthiness and transparency:** Organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency and the goal of building and maintaining trust among staff, clients, and family members of those receiving services.
3. **Peer support and mutual self-help:** These are integral to the organizational and service delivery approach and are understood as key vehicles for building trust and in establishing safety and empowerment.
4. **Collaboration and mutuality:** There is true partnering and leveling of power differences between staff and clients and among organizational staff from direct-care staff to administrators. There is recognition that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making. The organization recognizes that everyone has a role to play in a trauma-informed approach. One does not have to be a therapist to be therapeutic.

5. **Empowerment, voice, and choice:**

Throughout the organization and among the clients served, individuals' strengths are recognized, built on, and validated, and new skills are developed as necessary. The organization



aims to strengthen the staff's, clients', and family members' experiences of choice and recognize that every person's experience is unique and requires an individualized approach. This includes a belief in resilience and in the ability of individuals, organizations, and communities to heal and promote recovery from trauma. This builds on what clients, staff, and communities have to offer, rather than responding to perceived deficits.

6. **Cultural, historical, and gender issues:** The organization actively moves past cultural stereotypes and biases (e.g., based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, geography), offers gender responsive services, leverages the healing value of traditional cultural connections, and recognizes and addresses historical trauma.

Conclusion

As a supervised visitation monitor, you will encounter and work with many families who have suffered some sort of trauma. It is important for you to understand what trauma is, what trauma informed care entails and to understand the six core principals to deliver services in an effective manner. As a visitation monitor you can help families feel safe and give them back control and empowerment over their lives.

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