



4-H School-Age Child Care  
University of California Cooperative Extension

# PARENT STYLES

## Tips for Busy Parents

### WAYS TO TALK WITH CHILDREN

*Author: Anne Cotter, Home Economist, Orange County*

*Good communications helps children develop confidence, self worth, and good relationships with others. It makes life with them more pleasant and helps them grow into adults with high self-esteem and respect for others.*

#### **Good Communication Leads to:**

- warm relationships
- cooperation
- feelings of worth

#### **Poor Communication Leads to:**

- kids who “turn off” adults
- conflicts and bickering
- feelings of worthlessness

#### **How Can I Talk With (not at) Children???**

- ☆ Say “Please” “Thank You”, ‘You’re Welcome”
- ☆ Show Interest - Pay Attention To What The Child Is Saying
- ☆ Do Not Interrupt When Children Are Talking
- ☆ Use Kind Words to Encourage and Build Up Self Esteem
- ☆ Don’t Use Unkind Words That Tear Down and Hurt
- ☆ Communicate Acceptance (“I agree,” “You’re right”)
- ☆ Have the Child’s Attention Before Talking With Him
- ☆ Talk at the Child’s Eye Level
- ☆ Use Sincere Comments (“I see,” “Oh,” “That’s good”)

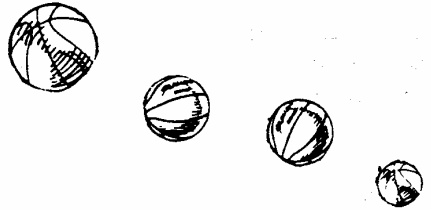
**Resource: Winning Ways to Talk With Young Children, B. Schench & D. Riley, PHD, Cooperative Extension, University of Wisconsin**

**IDEA TOSS**

Here is a way to improve communication with children. Try it out and see how it works.

**What You'll Need:**

- 6 or 8 tennis balls .



**What To Do:**

- ☆ Ask your child to sit on the opposite side of the room from you.
- ☆ Throw him a tennis ball. Ask him to catch it and hold it in his lap. Then toss him another and another.
- ☆ Sit and look at one another for a few minutes until he asks you to explain what you're doing.
- ☆ Tell him, "It isn't much of a game until you throw the balls back to me, is it?" Continue to show him how conversation is also a game that requires people to toss their ideas back and forth. Explain that if you merely "catch" the other person's comment, but don't return it with one of your own, that's like holding the tennis balls in your lap; it ruins the fun.
- ☆ Practice "tossing" words back and forth with your child. You may say, for example, "did you have a good day in school?" If the child says, "Yeah," in return, he has merely caught your words. But if he says "Yes, I got an A in math," he has learned to throw you a comment of his own.
- ☆ Encourage your child to play "Idea Toss" with friends and family members. See how well he returns the other person's comments.