



Communicating With Your Child: Tune in and Hear Your Child's Cues

All behavior is communication. The first step to developing effective communication with your child is to become an expert at reading your child's cues and interpreting the message they are sending. Get into a problem solving mindset and figure out what the child is telling you. Tune in and 'hear' the child's message before you respond to the behavior.

Your child is...	Your child might be saying....
Shouting	"I am angry!" or "I am excited!" or "I feel like this is unfair!"
Biting	"I don't like what just happened!" or "My feelings are hurt!" or "I need some attention!"
Running away from you or refusing to move	"I don't want to stop what I'm doing and start something new!" or "I don't want to do what you asked!"
Head butting	"I am angry about something!" "I am confused and frustrated about something!" or "I need physical comforting!"
Crying	"I am tired." or "I am hungry." or "I am hurt." or "I am scared!"
Throwing things	"I am done with this." or, "I don't like how this is going!"

Before responding to your child, remember to:

- Respond immediately, calmly and positively to show you are paying attention
- Tune in to what the child is communicating
- Get on your child's level
- Look the child in the face
- Stay calm
- Use a reassuring tone of voice
- If your child needs personal space or touch, respond to those needs

Tuning in and 'hearing' your child's behavior will help you plan an appropriate response and pave the way for more successful communication.