

When parents talk less, their children actually listen more!

When your child was younger, he needed to hear you talk a lot. It's how he learned the language that describes the world around him.

Now that your child is older, he needs a lot less repetitive narration. Yet many parents of elementary schoolers find themselves talking on and on—even while their children are listening less and less.

Of course you still want to talk with your child about his day. You want to have conversations about what he did in school and what he's thinking about. But if you're like most parents, you'd like to spend less time talking about whether it's time to feed the pets or why his clothes are still scattered all over his bedroom floor.

Experts have identified three strategies to help parents effectively communicate with children:

1. Make infrequent requests. As much as possible, help your child develop a routine for things like homework and daily chores. Routines can reduce the need for nagging.
2. Keep the volume down. Your child doesn't hear you any more clearly if you yell. As a matter of fact, he will probably just tune you out.
3. Keep it short. When you do have to give your child directions, limit the number of words you use. So instead of saying, "Jack, I need you to get to the car. Don't forget your backpack. Do you have your homework?" try saying, "Homework and backpack in the car, please."

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