Dear parent or caregiver,

Welcome to our second issue of Health Links! Thank you for taking the time to read our spring inaugural issue. We want to recognize Emmy from Weatherford, Emma from Flower Mound, Brett and Nicki from Fort Worth and Haley from Rhome for completing the activities in the Kids’ Corner and mailing them back. We hope you enjoyed your care packages and that the goodies have made your summer a little safer and healthier.

In this issue, we focus on communication. Open and honest communication is important in every relationship. This is especially true with your children and with those who are part of your children’s lives like health care providers, teachers and other caregivers. Honest communication can make any topic or situation easier to manage.

We’ve included some suggestions for having smooth discussions with children. For your children, the Kids’ Corner has some tips to help kids talk to parents. Like in our last issue, there are fun activities to complete, share and send in for a chance to win a prize.

In just a few short weeks, children will be returning to school. We encourage you to take care of immunizations and physicals sooner rather than later. Now is also the time to ease your children back into a sleep schedule of going to bed a bit earlier so that they are well rested when school starts and are not shocked by those early morning wake-up calls.

Sincerely,

Larry Tubb
Executive Director
The Center for Children’s Health

Jackie Meeks
Director of Community Health Research
The Center for Children’s Health

Our promise
Knowing that every child’s life is sacred, it is the promise of Cook Children’s to improve the health of every child in our region through the prevention and treatment of illness, disease and injury.

To subscribe to this newsletter electronically, please send an email to thecenter@cookchildrens.org with the subject line “Subscribe to Health links.”
Try some of these suggestions when talking with your kids.

1. **Connect before you direct**
   Before giving your child directions, get down to your child’s eye level and engage your child in eye-to-eye contact. Teach them how to focus by saying, “Mary, I need your eyes.” “Billy, I need your ears.” Offer the same body language when listening to the child. Be sure not to make your eye contact too intense that your child perceives it as controlling, rather than connecting.

2. **Address the child**
   Open your request with the child’s name, “Lauren, will you please...”

3. **Keep it brief**
   Use the one-sentence rule: Put the main directive in the opening sentence. The longer you ramble, the more likely your child is to become “parent-deaf.” Too much talking is a very common mistake when dialoging about an issue. It gives the child the feeling that you’re not sure what it is you want to say. If they can keep you talking, they can get you sidetracked.

4. **Stay simple**
   Use short sentences with one-syllable words. Listen to how kids communicate with each other and take note. When your child shows that glazed, disinterested look, you are no longer being understood.

5. **Ask your child to repeat the request back to you**
   If they can’t, it’s too long or complicated.

6. **Make an offer the child can’t refuse**
   You can reason with a 2 or 3-year-old, especially to avoid power struggles. “Get dressed so you can go outside and play.” Offer a reason for your request that is to the child’s advantage and one that is difficult to refuse. This gives them a reason to move away from the power struggle and do what you want them to do.

7. **Be positive**
   Instead of “no running,” try: “inside we walk, outside you may run.”

8. **Begin your directives with “I want...”**
   Instead of “Get down,” say, “I want you to get down.” Instead of “Let Becky have a turn,” say “I want you to let Becky have a turn now.” This works well with children who want to please, but don’t like being ordered. By saying “I want,” you give a reason for compliance rather than just an order.

9. **“When... then”**
   “When you get your teeth brushed, then we’ll begin the story.” “When your work is finished, then you can watch TV.” “When,” which implies that you expect obedience, works better than “if,” which suggests that the child has a choice when you don’t mean to give him one.

10. **Legs first, mouth second**
    Instead of yelling, “Turn off the TV, it’s time for dinner!” walk into the room where your child is watching television, join in with your child’s interests for a few minutes, and then, during a commercial break, have your child turn off the TV. Going to your child conveys you’re serious about your request; otherwise children interpret this as a mere preference.

11. **Give choices when you can**
    “Do you want to put your pajamas on or brush your teeth first?” “Red shirt or blue one?”

Continued on the inside back panel.
Parents – Pull this section out and give it to your kids.

We know that talking with your parents may not always be the easiest thing to do. You may feel like they don’t always understand you or even listen to what you’re saying. We surveyed some of the kids that volunteer here at Cook Children’s and asked them what works for them when talking with their parents.

Here’s what they had to say:

1. Talk about problems up front before they get out of control.
2. Find words that express your feelings without making your parents defensive.
3. Communication is a two-way street; give your parents a chance to explain their point of view.
4. Yelling at your parents won’t get you very far and makes the situation worse most of the time.
5. Misunderstandings can happen if you’re not open with your thoughts and ideas.
6. Make an effort to talk about ordinary things, as that will help when you have to talk about the bigger things.
7. Recognize that timing is everything – watch for the right time to ask for things.
8. Take a breather when the conversation gets stressful.
9. If mom says no, DON’T go ask dad.
10. When you ask for something, be ready to explain “why.”

Tips submitted by Molly and Chris from the Cook Children’s Medical Center Youth Advisory Council.

YOU COULD WIN A PRIZE!

Complete the word find and crossword puzzle in this insert. Mail it to this address to be entered to win a cool prize:

Cook Children’s
The Center for Children’s Health
801 7th Ave.
Fort Worth, TX 76104

Must be received by Sept. 20
Find All The Words

Time yourself and see how long it takes for you to find all the words!

N A O Q J L U O R C Z N B S T
O I C S V K Z H C A E P U E Y
L W E D Y E N O H E N S G L G
E L I F E G U A R D W G S G R
M U I N O W S C C I D B P G A
R Y A F Z T S O M H U Y R O S
E F Y S E N H S M D E K A G S
T X N M U V U G D R Q R Y W F
A Z L S M I E Y I V E X R I Y
W E H A T I Z S O L I H V Y A
H S N A C K S G T Y H U T S L
A N T W Q S H D K G Q S I W P
V C V H H S A N E R N J A N J
N C O A R O P Y E O A G A L U
B W D S X W Y I D D J P O H F

Buddy  Bugspray  Cherry  Fan  Flashlight
Goggles  Grass  Hat  Helmet  Honeydew
Lifeguard  Life Vest  Park  Peach  Play
Snacks  Sunscreen  Swimsuit  Thermos  Watermelon
CROSS THIS PUZZLE

This crossword will test your knowledge of the history of communication and some different types of communication that exist.

ACROSS
4. Alexander Graham Bell invented this in 1876
7. A way to communicate happiness with your face
8. A way to say hello with your hand
10. Code in which letters are represented by long and short signals of light and sound
12. A homing pigeon trained to carry messages tied to its neck or leg
13. Electronic message
14. Written communication
16. Battery-operated radio transmitting and receiving set

DOWN
1. People who regularly write letters to each other
2. Mail without an envelope
3. A talk or the verbal sharing of ideas between two or more people
5. Delivered mail on horseback in the 1850s
6. Language formed by a system of hand movements for communication
9. Referring to a phone without a cord
11. A way to communicate with God
15. Typed words sent electronically to a cell phone
School lunch ideas that taste great and are good for you!

As kids head back to school, here are some lunch ideas for kids and parents to try together.

Kids – lookout, your classmates may want to trade lunches with you!

**Barbeque chicken sandwich**

**Ingredients**
- 1/2 cup shredded cooked chicken
- 1/4 cup shredded carrots
- 2 tablespoons barbecue sauce
- 2 teaspoons light ranch dressing
- 1 small whole-wheat sandwich bun
- 1 leaf romaine lettuce

**Preparation**
1. Combine chicken, carrots and barbecue sauce in a bowl.
2. Spread ranch dressing on the bun.
3. Top with the chicken mixture and lettuce.

**Nutrition per serving:**
- 324 calories; 7 g fat (2 g sat, 2 g mono); 63 mg cholesterol; 39 g carbohydrates; 26 g protein;
- 4 g fiber; 657 mg sodium; 488 mg potassium.

**Strawberry and cream cheese sandwich**

**Ingredients**
- 1 tablespoon reduced-fat cream cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon honey
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly grated orange zest
- 2 slices very thin whole-wheat sandwich bread
- 2 medium strawberries, sliced

**Preparation**
1. Combine cream cheese, honey and orange zest in a bowl.
2. Spread bread with the cheese mixture.
3. Place sliced strawberries on one piece of bread, top with the other.

**Nutrition per serving:**
- 128 calories; 4 g fat (2 g sat, 1 g mono); 8 mg cholesterol; 18 g carbohydrates; 2 g added sugars; 4 g protein; 3 g fiber; 191 mg sodium; 63 mg potassium.

For more healthy eating ideas, visit cookchildrens.org/checkup and look for the link to our Checkup Kitchen.
Continued...Suggestions when talking with your kids.

12. Speak developmentally correctly
The younger the child, the shorter and simpler your directives should be. Consider your child's level of understanding. For example, a common error parents make is asking a 3-year-old, "Why did you do that?" Most adults can't always answer that question about their behavior. Try instead, "Let's talk about what you did."

13. Speak socially correctly
Even a 2-year-old can learn "please." Expect your child to be polite. Children shouldn't feel manners are optional. Speak to your children the way you want them to speak to you.

14. Speak psychologically correctly
Threats and judgmental openers are likely to put the child on the defensive. "You" messages make a child clam up. "I" messages are non-accusing. Instead of "You'd better do this..." or "You must...," try "I would like..." or "I am so pleased when you..." Instead of "You need to clear the table," say "I need you to clear the table." Don't ask a leading question when a negative answer is not an option. "Will you please pick up your coat?" Just say, "Pick up your coat, please."

15. Write it
Reminders can evolve into nagging so easily, especially for preteens. Without saying a word, you can communicate anything you need said. Talk with a pad and pencil. Leave humorous notes for your child. Then sit back and watch it happen.

16. Talk the child down
The louder your child yells, the softer you should respond. Let your child vent while you calmly interject timely comments: "I understand" or "Can I help?" Sometimes just having a caring listener available will wind down the tantrum. If you come in at their level, you have to deal with two tantrums. Be the adult.

17. Settle the listener
Before giving your directive, restore emotional balance, otherwise you are wasting your time. Nothing sinks in when a child is an emotional wreck.

18. Replay your message
Toddlers need to be told a thousand times. Children under 2 have difficulty internalizing your directives. Most 3-year-olds are able to internalize your directives so that what you ask them to do or not do is understood. Do less and less repeating as your child gets older. Preteens regard repetition as nagging.

19. Let your child complete the thought
Instead of "Don't leave your mess piled up," try: "Matthew, think of where you want to store your soccer stuff." Letting the child fill in the blanks is more likely to create a lasting lesson.

20. Use rhyme rules
"If you hit, you must sit." Get your child to repeat them.

21. Give likable alternatives
You can’t go by yourself to the park; but you can play in the neighbor’s yard.

22. Give advance notice
"We are leaving soon. Say bye-bye to the toys, bye-bye to the girls…"

23. Open up a closed child
Carefully chosen phrases open up closed little minds and mouths. Stick to topics that you know your child gets excited about. Ask questions that require more than a yes or no. Stick to specifics. Instead of "Did you have a good day at school today?" try "What is the most fun thing you did today?"

24. Use “When you…I feel…because…"
"When you run away from mommy in the store, I feel worried because you might get lost."

25. Close the discussion
If a matter is closed to discussion, say so. "I'm not changing my mind about this. Sorry," You'll save wear and tear on both you and your child. Reserve your "I mean business" tone of voice for when you do.
Let's talk! What is and isn't being talked about by parents in our six-county area?

![Bar chart showing percentage of parents discussing various topics]

- Healthy eating habits
- Friends and companions
- School and sports
- Drugs and alcohol
- Your child's concerns
- Sexual activity

Denton - Hood - Johnson - Parker - Tarrant - Wise

Community-wide Children's Health Assessment & Planning Survey, 2012