

Effective Communication ebook

Five conversations that show you how your child really follows through

Bloomster

Why communication is hard at this age

It's a skill, not a personality. "Shy" and "talkative" aren't the point — communicating well is learned, and 9–14 is when it's learned.

They're pulling away — on purpose. As kids seek independence, many talk to their parents less and keep more private. That's natural, and it's exactly when the skill matters most.

Half their conversations have no faces. Texts, chats, comments — a huge share of their communication now happens without tone, expression, or body language to read.

Speaking for them backfires. Ordering their meal, doing their check-in, emailing the teacher — every time we talk for them, they lose a rep they needed.

Your job is handing over the mic. Small, real moments — the restaurant order, the question for the coach — are where the skill gets built.

How to use this

Not at the table. At pickup, in the drive-thru line, walking the dog — sideways works better than eye-to-eye.

Read one aloud like you just thought of it. "Okay, weird question — imagine this..."

Don't correct the first answer. Even a mumbled one. Ask "what would you say next?" — you're listening for how they communicate, not grading.



SCENARIO 1:

Can they talk their way to the backpack?

Your friend realizes at school that he's misplaced his backpack. He can't remember where he left it, and he's starting to panic. What could he do — and who could he talk to — to solve this?

Why this one

A small problem, solvable with words. One clear question to the right person fixes this entirely.

Small stays small — if you ask. Kids who can't ask for help watch little problems grow.

Listen for

Talking as the tool. Do teachers, the office, or friends appear in the plan — or does he just retrace and hope?

Clear and simple. Can they say exactly what's needed — what, where, when — in a sentence?

SCENARIO 2:

What do they see without words?

You arrive at class and see your classmate. Her hood is up, her earbuds are in, and she hasn't taken anything out of her backpack. She sits with her arms crossed, not looking at anyone. What do you think is going on with her?

Why this one

Not a word is spoken. Most of what people tell us never gets said out loud — this tests whether your child reads it.

Their own signals count too. Kids who read body language start noticing what their own is saying

Listen for

The signals, decoded. Hood, earbuds, crossed arms — do they read "something's wrong," or just "she's weird today"?

A next move. Would they check on her, give her space on purpose, tell someone — or do nothing?

SCENARIO 3:

Will they speak up before someone gets hurt?

It's after school, and you see two of your classmates doing something dangerous on the playground. There are no adults around, but you're sure someone is about to get hurt. What would you say — and how would you say it so they actually stop?

Why this one

Speaking up is the hard part. Kids often see the danger clearly — and stay quiet anyway.

The stakes are real. Inexperience and social pressure push kids to say nothing, right when words matter most.

Listen for

A voice with certainty. Is it a confident "stop, that's going to end badly" — or a mumble from the sidelines?

Backup in the plan. If they won't listen, does getting an adult come up — or is that "snitching"?

SCENARIO 4:

Heard, or just waiting to talk?

You're telling a friend about something that happened to you, and halfway through you can tell they're not really listening — they're nodding, but they're glancing at their phone and already jumping in with their own story. How does that feel, and what would you do?

Why this one

Listening is half of communicating. The skill isn't just talking well — it's making someone feel heard. This tests whether they know the difference.

They do it too. Recognizing bad listening in someone else is the first step to catching it in themselves.

Listen for

Naming the gap. Can they describe what "not really listening" looks like — the phone, the interrupting, the story-topping?

Their own habits. Does it occur to them they might do the same — or is it only the friend's fault?

SCENARIO 5:

Do they know what to do online?

> Your friend texts you: someone has been leaving mean comments on his social media account, and they're getting worse. He doesn't know what to do. What would you tell him — and what could he do to make it stop?

Why this one

The hardest channel. Online conflict has no tone, no faces, and an audience — everything hard about communication at once.

It's already their world. Most kids will face some version of this — the plan is worth having early.

Listen for

The digital toolbox. Do block, report, screenshot, and don't-reply come up — or just "ignore it"?

A trusted adult, eventually. Does telling a parent or teacher enter the plan — or does it stay kid-only?

What to listen for across all five

One answer tells you little. Patterns tell you a lot:

Small problems stay stuck. Asking one clear question never occurs to them as the fix.

Words are the only channel. Body language, tone, and silences go completely unread.

Quiet when it counts. They see the danger, feel the discomfort — and say nothing.

Fixes before feelings. A hurting friend gets advice, not understanding.

Heard a few of these? Normal — communication is learned, and this is exactly the age to learn it.

If one of those patterns sounded familiar, you haven't found a problem — you've found the starting point. Here's what to do with it.

Bloomster Course: Communication Foundations

One conversation opens the door — practice builds the skill. In this course, your child follows Frankie, a young man preparing for high school, as he practices his communication skills through the scenarios of his summer camping experience. What they build:

Every channel, covered. Speaking, body language, tone, and digital — reading them and using them.

Listening as a skill. Active listening and empathy — understanding people, not just waiting to talk.

A voice that speaks up. Assertive communication — expressing needs, setting boundaries, saying the hard thing respectfully.

A clean digital footprint. Online etiquette, privacy, and handling conflict in the channel with no faces.

Start the course free — 7 days, no credit card, nothing to cancel. Find Your Child's Starting Point.

START FREE

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