



# CONNECTIONS

## LOCAL EFAP NEWS

Vol. 10 No. 9

### FOCUS ON FAMILY

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### *Being more than an "okay" family*

On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your family's communications? If you are like most people, you'd probably answer "okay" - maybe between a four and a seven.

But if you thought about it for a while, you might say: "Well, sometimes we're all so busy, we never sit down and really talk." or "Rather than provoke a fight, I just keep quiet." or "Maybe we could all be closer and more loving."

Honest communication and careful listening can help assure that your family stays in tune, sharing maximum love and support.

### **Rating your family**

Do family members feel that they understand each other's needs? Do family conflicts reach a satisfactory end? Here are three check points:

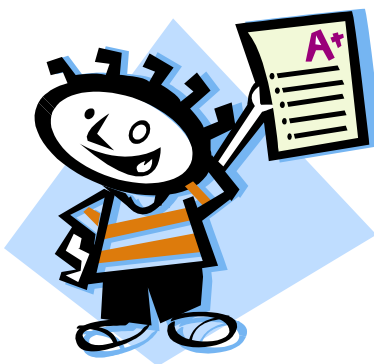
1. Is your approach positive, starting with how you feel? For example,

"I feel important when you listen to me..."

2. Are you specific about the issue at hand? If you criticize, are you constructive? For example, "You didn't make your bed this morning. If you need more time, we can..."
3. Do you negotiate? Even if you disagree on an issue, can you agree on a compromise? For example, "I don't agree, but I'll try for a week because I understand your reasons."

### **Can you relate?**

Outside friends, school or work activities, separation of family members, and just plain fatigue creates problems for you. Messages become unclear because it's easier to blame or bully than to take the time to discuss things. You may hold feelings back because you don't want to "start something." As unresolved problems build, mutual respect can disappear. Finally, there just doesn't seem to be enough time or energy to pay attention to each other. Cont...



**BACK TO SCHOOL**

# CONNECTIONS



**Doing family chores together can be a good time to talk.**

## What works

Here are standard guidelines for healthy communication.

1. Be honest and share feelings.
2. Listen and watch so you know when others are needy.
3. Develop a manner of speech that is open and clear.
4. Take responsibility for personal thoughts and actions.
5. Regularly discuss values and beliefs.
6. Encourage positive values, and act as a role model.

## Making time

Your family may find that it's a lot easier to be patient with each other when all of you know what's going on. Some families set aside an hour a week just to talk about individual and group needs.

Some working parents feel that the first five minutes after they get home is critical. Regardless of how tough a day has been, taking the time for an individual greeting and hug says "I recognize you."

Tub time tuck in time kitchen time and other short periods can be loving when someone is willing to listen. A bonus is that, when you pay attention to trivial things, your children may be encouraged to talk about the serious things.

## Help!

Family counsellors can help when there's no understanding or mutual effort to make things better. Each family member can learn to listen, to talk, to fight fair, to compromise and to cooperate.

-source: *People and Problems*

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

**You Deserve a Little Lift**

**"Listen to your dreams. They are the whispers of your heart telling you all you'll ever need to be happy."**

**Jennifer Rose Cerulean**

**EFAP Rep Annual Maintenance**

**will be held in North Bay**

**on Friday, October 7, 2005**

**Please contact Debbie at 494-8086**

**to confirm your attendance**

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