

Communication and professional relationships

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Explain how you use effective communication in developing positive relationships with children, young people and adults. Why is this important?

1. 1 In developing positive relationships we use effective communication in several ways. We use it to: help us better understand a situation or person which can help to determine our approach when engaging with them. build trust and respect. If individuals feel comfortable speaking with us and feel they can approach us at any time on any subject, they are more likely to co-operate and look favourably on any suggestions made. show that we care about the welfare and future of an individual and will do our best to aid in their success ensure that all parties are agreed upon the same goal, making sure that everyone is clear about the final aim and how it will be achieved. build and maintain a positive working environment where creativity and learning can flourish. It is important to do this because poor communication can lead to misunderstandings, lack of trust and conflict. Without a positive relationship you are unlikely to gain support and co-operation and find it challenging to achieve a good outcome from any situation.

Explain the principles of relationship building with children, young people and adults

1. 2 When trying to develop positive relationships there are several principles to follow. Firstly effective communication is essential. You must be clear in what you say and ensure you have been understood correctly. At the end of a communication you can reiterate your key points and if necessary outline responsibilities and actions. Also be sure to use language appropriate to the person with whom you are communicating.

When speaking with young children keep key points to a minimum and ask them to repeat what you have said. Secondly, take time to listen to others and try to understand their point of view. Use active listening techniques to show that you are interested in what they are saying and respond appropriately. Also make sure that, if you tell someone you will get back to them, you do get back to them. This will help engender a sense of trust and respect. It is also essential that you show respect for the person with whom you are communicating.

Remember their name and details of how they like to be addressed and issues which are personal to them. Recalling details of their lives adds to the feeling that you are genuinely interested in them and their welfare. When communicating be sure to acknowledge the individual. Accommodate any religious and cultural beliefs and show that you value these differences. Be considerate of the person's situation trying to understand and accommodate any issues which may influence their feelings, actions and responses.

Finally, remain positive and retain a sense of humour. Laughter is a good way to break the ice and relieve tension in a stressful situation. relationships and the way people communicate 1. 3 There are several ways in which social, professional and cultural contexts may affect our relationships and the way we communicate. We must remember that communication is not just verbal and context will influence the way we act, what we wear, how we communicate and what we say. In a social setting our actions, language and dress may be less formal.

If we have colleagues and parents from school as friends outside of school, then we might perhaps greet them with a hug and a wave. Our language might incorporate slang and jokes and conversation might be more generic and less serious. We might be more casual in our attire and the situation would suggest whether this is acceptable. For example, you would not be expected to attend a party wearing your best suit. The manner in which we communicate socially is also likely to be different from a professional setting.

As well as telephone and face to face conversations we might also engage via text message, email and social media sites and we would be unlikely to write a letter to someone we might see daily. Communications might, for example, utilise text speak and jargon and not necessarily demand an immediate response if any at all. In a professional context you would be expected to act, speak and dress more formally. Your actions, language and clothing should match the severity of the issue which you will address and show appropriate respect for the location and people with whom you are meeting.

If participating in a parent/teacher meeting at school for example the same people you greeted with a hug the night before would be better greeted with perhaps a handshake to highlight the position you hold in this scenario. Our language would be more formal and depending who was present we might try to eliminate jargon to ensure clarity and minimise misunderstandings. Similarly again our clothing would be more formal to identify the position we hold and show respect for those involved in any meeting.

When contacting people professionally the use of social media sites would not be appropriate to discuss any matters relating to school, pupils or staff. Text messages might be appropriate to inform parents/carers of a school social event for example but to arrange a meeting or discuss an important matter it would be more appropriate to speak with a parent/carer or write a letter if the contact needs to be documented. When working with outside agencies email, for ease of use and speed, has become the standard form of communication but again when broaching a sensitive or important issue, a phone call or face to face meeting might be preferred.

Emails can easily be misread which can lead to misunderstanding and conflict. When speaking we can use tone of voice to help ensure a point is understood correctly and face to face we can use body language in the same way. The timeframe in which we contact someone or reply to a communication can also affect relationships. When someone has taken the time to contact you they will expect a response to show that you value their contact and it should be made in the same manner or more personally. Responding to a phone call with an email, for example, could be seen as rude and deter future contact.

Similarly, delaying a response could suggest that you do not value the input of the individual or consider them or their issue to be important and bring about the same result. Different cultures may also have different standards in terms of behaviour, dress, communication and contact. Actions could be misinterpreted and cause offence leading to the breakdown of a relationship. If you are meeting with someone from a different culture it may be worth

doing some research and asking their preferred form of contact etc. to show that you value their beliefs.

However, whilst it may be detrimental not to account for cultural differences you could see the same consequences if you assume differences because of background or race when actually there are none. What skills do you need to communicate with children and young people 2. 1 Communication is still a relatively new thing for children and young people and they may not be used to asking questions and holding conversations. One skill required to communicate effectively is giving children and young people opportunities to speak.

As adults we are inclined to think that we know what children are thinking and feeling and try to tell them this or fill the gaps in their speech. Whilst we should continue to try and communicate with children as often as possible we should ensure it is a two-way conversation and not a one-way stream of instructions. We should remain patient and allow children time to organise their thoughts and formulate their sentences. When a child is relaxed and at ease they will be more forthcoming.

Children may be shy and reluctant to say more than a few words if they feel you are not interested in what they have to say. Using positive body language we can encourage children to speak out. We should come down to the child's level, face them and maintain eye contact. Remaining focussed on the child rather than continuing with another task will confirm your interest and appropriate facial expressions will show that you are listening and have understood what they are saying. Active listening is another key skill.

Be interested and make appropriate responses whilst the child is speaking to confirm that you are really listening. Add to this by repeating back what the child has said to ensure your understanding is correct and by giving positive comments when they have finished. Asking open questions will extend the conversation giving the child more practice, boost the child's confidence so they are encouraged to communicate more and model a real conversation for them to learn from. Finally, we must also ensure that communication is appropriate for the child or young person and be able to adapt the style we use.

Depending on the age and ability of the child we may be able to simply converse or might need to incorporate visual support or play into the communication. We should not assume children and young people will not understand but instead make our communication clear, use vocabulary which is appropriate to their age and encourage questioning. Give a detailed explanation of how you adapt communication with children and young people for:

2. a The age of the When communicating with younger children you should try choose a setting which is familiar to the child and where they are more confident - their favourite area of the classroom for example.

Get down to the level of the child perhaps sitting on the carpet and use body language to make them feel more comfortable - ensure you are facing the child, smile, nod, turn toward them, keep your arms open and remove any barriers between you. Younger children will require more reassurance and perhaps more physical contact. They may feel more confident holding your hand or sitting close together. Vocabulary should be kept simple and

sentences short, broken down into easy steps. The same point may need to be repeated several times in different ways and it is helpful to provide examples based around their own experiences.

If a child is very reluctant to communicate you may want to use puppets to speak through, include pictures or props to help them engage or perhaps incorporate your communication into a favourite game. The attention span of younger children is very short and you must also account for this. Monitor the length of time you spend together and include attention switches to maintain their interest: change your method of communication, switch speakers, move location, ask questions etc. Older children and young people will still need to feel comfortable in your company but are more independent and will require less reassurance and physical contact.

They are more familiar with the school environment so will find it easier to communicate in different settings but will be more comfortable in a setting they have used before. Older children often view themselves as grown up and will appreciate being treated accordingly. Positive body language will still be beneficial in encouraging a child to speak but it will no longer be necessary to sit on the floor. Language and vocabulary should be more mature and sentences can be more complex. It may also not be necessary to repeat a point so often unless it is something new and above that person's ability level.

Examples can be drawn from a variety of sources as their experiences are wider and additional materials should be more sophisticated such as written texts or "you tube" clips. Older children are more aware of themselves and

can be easily embarrassed. They will benefit from confidence boosting reminders of how well they are progressing and positive re-enforcement. They will, however, withdraw and react negatively if patronised, preferring to be treated with respect and spoken to honestly. With age attention span also increases so it is still necessary to include attention switches to maintain focus but not as frequently. the context of the communication We will encounter children in a variety of situations at school and it will be necessary to adapt our communication accordingly. Primarily our contact will be made inside school during a learning activity. In this case we need to remain quite formal, be directive and model the behaviour we require through our own actions. Ground rules should be laid down in clear, concise instructions and the learning objectives highlighted to ensure all children fully understand what we expect and are trying to achieve from the lesson.

There will be other children in the same area working on of our group but not distract the others. We can do this through tone of voice, choice of vocabulary and supplementary resources but must be wary not to overexcite the group because of the other learners present. If your activity is away from other learners then it may be possible to incorporate physical activity and allow greater expression. Distractions will be plentiful and we will need to encourage and focus our learners through positive re-enforcement and challenges.

If appropriate to the task we should encourage discussion through questioning but keep discussion restricted to the subject at hand. In a more social setting, for example the playground, we can be less formal and more

relaxed in our approach. This would be reflected in our body language, tone of voice and vocabulary. These times can be used as opportunities to build relationships and get to know the children better. Children can be encouraged to discuss outside interests and we might share our own experiences to help form a bond.

Whilst it may be necessary to give little reminders of school rules to avoid bad behaviour it should not be necessary to outline them in full and they can be made in a more playful and conspiratorial manner - a helpful friend rather than a figure of authority. Although conversation might be more light hearted we must still remember to maintain the relationship of teacher and pupil. A school trip, however, is a more social event, but still a learning activity and the degree of formality should remain on a similar level to the classroom.

The formality of the pupil teacher relationship should remain so the children understand that you "are in charge". Children will need to be reminded often of their objectives but communication might be more light hearted and children allowed to speak more freely, discussing outside interests highlighted by the current situation. Outside the school environment they will be excited and more forgetful of their code of conduct. It will not always be possible to speak with the whole group when on a trip so we should communicate through our own behaviour, modelling what we expect from the children: remaining focussed, respectful, and responsible.