

# HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES: GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

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Communication is the **cornerstone of any successful relationship**, and it is particularly important **when raising children with learning difficulties**. When parents and educators master the **art of communication**, they can **create an environment where** children feel **understood, safe, supported and intrinsically motivated**. Emphasis on **empathy, understanding and expressing one's own feelings and needs is the key** to helping children **overcome their challenges**.

## What is communication?

Communication is the **process of exchanging information, feelings and needs** between two or more people. When bringing up children who have difficulty learning, it is important that this **communication is clear, respectful and empathetic**. Through appropriate communication, we can help children to **feel safe and supported, which is crucial for their progress**.

## How to communicate with children who have learning difficulties:

- 1 Understanding and compassion:** First, make sure you understand your child's point of view. Listen to their problems and feelings without interrupting. Show that you understand their challenges and that you are there to support them.
- 2 Express your feelings and thoughts:** When talking to your child, be open about your feelings and thoughts. Tell them how you feel when you are trying to contribute and encourage them to share their feelings too. This shows them that it is normal to talk about their feelings.
- 3 Active listening:** Listen to your child with full attention. Do not interrupt when they are talking and show that you understand their feelings and needs. Active listening means focusing on your child's needs, the meanings of words and non-verbal cues, and letting him know that you care about him and his point of view.
- 4 Use "I-messages":** Instead of criticising or judging, use "I-messages" to express your feelings and needs. For example, instead of "You always stop doing tasks", say "I worry when you don't finish tasks because I know you can do so much more".



## Five examples of empathetic communication:

- 1 **When a child doesn't want to do a task:** "I know you find this task difficult and you may be worried that you won't be able to do it. I am here to support you. Let's try together, and if it's still hard, we'll find another way. We are in this together."
- 2 **When a child doubts his/her abilities:** "I believe in you and I know you can do this. You have a great problem-solving ability and you always find creative solutions. Together we will do it."
- 3 **When a child despairs because of learning difficulties:** "I understand that the task is not easy for you, but I know that you are persistent and that with small steps we can move forward. Let's look at one part of the task at a time, together we will overcome all the obstacles."
- 4 **When a child needs encouragement to learn on his own:** "I know that learning can be tiring, but I have faith in your abilities. You have excellent problem-solving skills and I am proud of your achievements. Try to learn on your own for a while, and if you need help, I'll be here to help you. Together we will find the best way to make you do as well as possible."
- 5 **Encouraging independence:** "I know that schoolwork can be difficult. Think that you can learn a lot of new things that will make it easier for you to apply them in your everyday life if you try on your own. Try on your own first and if you get into trouble, you can always turn to me. I'll be happy to help you so that together we can learn everything you need to know."

Effective communication is at **the heart of educating and supporting children** with learning difficulties. By learning to **express our feelings, listen actively** and use **empathetic messages**, we can create an environment where children feel **safe, accepted, supported and able to overcome their challenges**.

**Epeka** emphasises that through **loving and understanding communication**, we can **transform children's lives** and **empower them for a bright future**.

You can find out more about me and my **contribution through individual coaching and programmes** at this link: [petracirkovski.si](http://petracirkovski.si)

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