



Advice from Speech and Language Therapy for Parents and Guardians Coronavirus has changed all our lives at the moment. The speech and language therapy team are aware that life is a bit different and more stressful than usual because we are all at home more and out of our usual routines and habits.

Calm communication with children is important all of the time, but even more so just now. To give you some support at this time, the speech and language therapy team would like to encourage all families to follow some simple but effective advice that can really help to keep children calm and secure by using a positive communication style.

Firstly, it really helps if all children have:

- a structure so they know what's going to happen each day
- help to make sense of all the changes to their usual routine
- a calm and reassuring adult to tell their thoughts and feelings to

The next thing to think about is the **style of communication** and **the words you use**. Using calm words and watching how you say them will make a big difference. This will help to stop children getting angry, overwhelmed or acting out.

- Tone of voice is really important. Keep a calm tone of voice even if you don't feel calm inside. This is especially important when your child is upset or distressed.
- Positive words are a good way to help. Focus on telling your child what you want them to do; try not to tell them what they shouldn't be doing. This is the very best way to help with their emotions. Try to avoid words like "no" and "don't". Negative words don't usually help to calm things down or give reassurance. Use positive words instead. Calmly saying "yes later" or suggesting an alternative is much less likely to trigger a reaction. A good example of using positive words is, rather than saying "**stop** jumping on the couch", you can say "**start** playing with your figures now"
- Using few words is better than too many words when you want to keep things calm. Too many words can be a trigger or make children more stressed.

Remember, **Use calm words and watch how you say them.**