

Effective Communication

Non Verbal Communication

“ **Nonverbal communication** is the transmission of messages or signals through a nonverbal platform such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and the distance between two individuals. ”

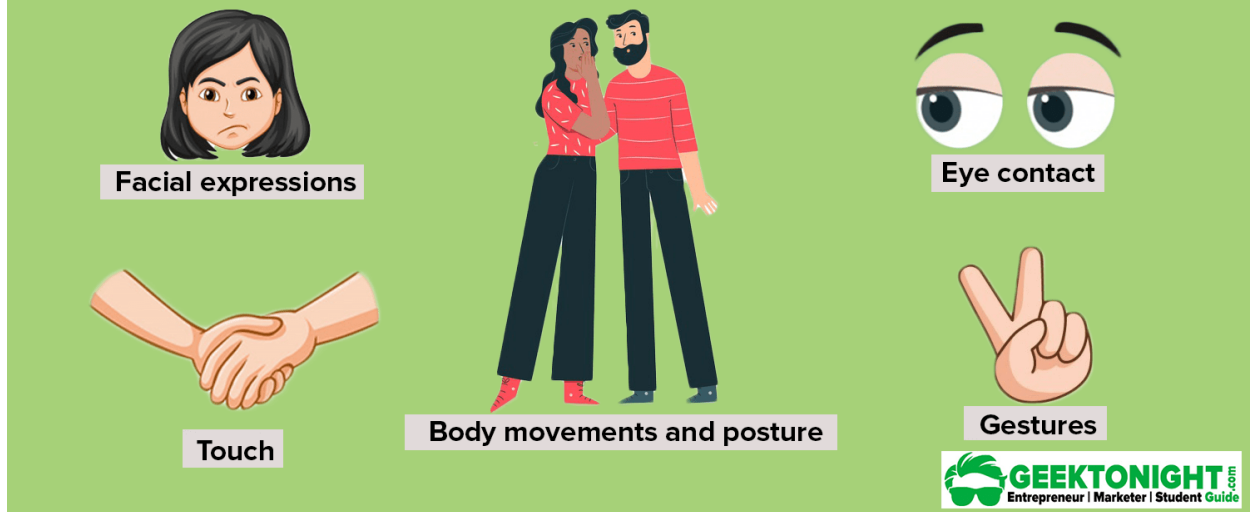


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Effective communication is very important when it comes to parenting your child. Words are powerful and it is important to think before you speak. Non-verbal communication also has a large impact on how you communicate with others. Sometimes it is not just what you say, but how you say it. Actions speak louder than words (Swartz et al., 2016).

Throughout a child's development from infant to adult, they learn many concepts, mannerisms, and ideas from watching individuals around them, including verbal and nonverbal communication skills. Therefore, parents need to model positive and appropriate communication skills with their children. This provides a way for your child to learn effective communication skills and provides a way in which you and your child can learn to communicate with each other in a positive way (Crain, 2005).

How can I effectively communicate with my child? What are ways I can show my child what effective communication looks like? Below are a few examples of ways to practice effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills with your children.

Skill #1: Providing Full and Complete Attention

When discussing with your child, it is important to show your child that you are actively listening and interested in what they want to discuss (Dyer, 2018). Luckily, there are a few easy and simple ways to use nonverbal “ques” to show you are listening. Active listening can be shown by doing things such as making eye-contact, facing towards your child when they are talking, and providing appropriate gestures to the topic being discussed (i.e., nodding).

Apply it: During the week, take approximately five minutes a day when your child comes home from school to ask them how school was for them on that given day. When the child begins to discuss their school, day-use non-verbal “ques” to show that you are listening and interested in the conversation

Skill #2: Reflecting Emotions

Often when children come to their parents to talk about a given situation, they want to feel that they are being heard or that their parent understands how they are feeling. Often this is described as “being in someone else’s shoes.” The ability to understand and reflect emotions to an individual is referred to as being empathetic. Understanding and portraying to your child that you understand their feelings will allow connection between you and your child while also showing an empathetic understanding of the given situation (Dyer, 2018).

Apply it: When your child has a situation they are discussing with you, consider any verbal and non-verbal ques that the child is presenting that give away what emotions they are feeling. If you feel your child is showing a specific emotion through their verbal and nonverbal communication skills, bring the emotions present into the conversation. “I can tell you are very anxious.” “You look to be very upset about this situation.” “I can see you are very sad about this happening.”

References:

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