



Dos & DON'Ts for Talking with Kids

“Yep.” “Nope.” “Maybe.” “Fine.”

Are you a parent who’s frustrated with one-word answers, or perhaps worse...the silent treatment? You’re probably just trying to find out what’s going on in your child’s life...right? So why does this happen so often between parents and their children? There are three simple reasons:

1. If it’s right after school or practice, your child is probably tired, or exhausted.
2. Your questions may sound a bit like an investigation or ESPN interview.
3. Your child doesn’t want to admit that the day wasn’t all that great.



What can we do to set us up for success and have better conversations? First, stay away from the typical four-word questions, like:

- How did it go?
- How did you do?
- What did you learn?
- How was yourbackhand, curve ball, corner kick, or flip turn?

Kids don’t like being interrogated any more than adults do!

Secondly, start the conversation with something that’s nice to hear like, “It’s good to see you!” Then share the highlights of your day or talk about some good news you heard.

Lastly, ask non-threatening questions about your child’s preferences for a snack, music choice, or TV show you might watch. Most important, make it safe to share. Eventually, the things your child would like to discuss will find their way into the chatter...without you ever asking. And then all you have to say is “Tell me more.”

Check yourself and your first words:

- When picking up your child from school
- When picking up your child after practice
- When arriving home at the end of the day

Phrases to try:

- “I’ve been looking forward to seeing you.”
- “Are you hungry or thirsty?”
- “I’m so lucky to be the one to pick you up!”
- “What was your favorite part of the day?”



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Discussion Guide for Parent and Athlete

1

What's your initial response when arriving at home?

- A greeting
- A question
- A judgment

2

Can you sense if your child:

- Needs quiet time?
- Needs your encouragement?
- Needs to laugh?
- Needs your patience?