

Communicating with Children

Goal: Find techniques that a particular child can most easily use to share information

Communication

- ❑ Occurs via a variety of senses
- ❑ Not limited to verbal interchanges
- ❑ Adults need to be flexible
- ❑ Find a technique that works

Attention to Detail: Site selection & Who is present

- ❑ Tools used depend upon the child's age, stage of development and details of child's situation

Under age 3: Child's home environment and having a known adult close by are important.

Preschoolers: Can easily tolerate short separations from caregivers. Parental figure indicates it is okay for child to be with non-family member. Setting should include familiar type toys.

School age: Settings other than traditional office setting – playroom, traveling in a car. May have too many distractions in a park or restaurant. Others may disrupt conversation. May want to plan an outing to a particular place to trigger memories. If talking around a table, using structured paper/pencil tasks, play materials or games puts children more at ease than just sitting and talking.

Adolescents: Usually communicate more openly in their room rather than in other areas of the house. Help them fully explore issues by seeing there are at least two sides to every issue. Look at the pro's and con's / pluses and minuses of a decision. By inviting input into both sides modeling good decision-making. Expand their thinking from either/or to include a variety of options between the two extremes. Our task: Help the young person become aware of his choices. His task: Become responsible for the choices he ultimately makes.