

# Children's Therapy and Family Resource Centre

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## Mutual Respect

*"Respect is what you have to have in order to get it." Bernard Malamud*

Our children are growing up in a society in which people are very sensitive to signs of disrespect. Often to disrespect somebody is often considered a personal attack and this could lead to violence. When we show our children respect, even when we are angry or providing discipline, we teach them to respect themselves while demonstrating how to treat others respectfully.

### Several ways to promote respect are:

1) Communication - Use "I" statements that express your feelings about a behaviour.

Eg: "I feel hurt when you call me a name."

2) Offer choices

Eg: "Either talk to me without yelling or go to your room until you have calmed down."

"Either talk to me respectfully about your wish to go to Sam's house or there will be no play dates for the rest of the week."

3) Participation - involve children in decisions that affect their life. This helps children to feel that they are important and that you respect their ideas. Follow family routines. This allows all members to know what is expected of them and gives them a sense of belonging.

Eg: "We have to go shopping today. What kind of fruit would you like to pick out?"

"I'm thinking about dinner for tonight. Do you have any ideas on what we could have?"

### Things to Avoid:

- Calling your child names. Eg: lazy, dumb, stupid, no good
- Ignoring them when they are speaking to you.
- Doing for them on a regular basis what they can do for themselves.
- Expecting them to fail, misbehave or mess up.
- Calling them a "bad boy" or "bad girl". *Remember that it is the behaviour you do not like, not your child!*