



Cameray Newsletter

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- Active listening involves an array of behaviors that express your attention, empathy, and respect.
- A few minutes of sincere, attentive listening is worth more than an hour of letting your child talk while you carry on with another activity
- Listening to your children will go far toward convincing them of your unconditional love.

Listen With Your Heart

Think back to when you were growing up, and all the times when you felt self-doubt, confusion, and frustration. It's tough growing up! You can help your children get through the bumps and bruises of childhood by simply being there for them. Children need to know that when the whole world feels like it's crashing down around them, they have one safe, secure place to go, and one bottomless source of unconditional love.

Listening is as much a skill as giving a speech is a skill. It's not just a matter of picking up sounds. Active listening involves an array of behaviors that express your attention, empathy, and respect. Listening to your children in this way will go far toward convincing them of your unconditional love. Keep these guidelines in mind when your child has something important to say to you:

Put down your paper or dish-towel. Shut off the TV. Maintain as much eye contact as your child seems comfortable with. Make body contact, such as a hand to the shoulder, if that seems appropriate. Often, when children are trying to express a

problem, thought or concern, their parents say they are listening, but half of their attention is somewhere else. You can't con a child this way. Typically, a few minutes of sincere, attentive listening is worth more than an hour of letting your child talk while you carry on with another activity.

Don't rush to jump in with solutions, ideas or lectures. Often, children just need a sounding board. They need another person listening to give them an opportunity to figure out exactly what they want to do. Solving your child's problem may give you the relief of ending his or her discomfort; but, in the long term, it's worth far more to them to get the support they need to formulate solutions on their own.

Demonstrate that you're listening by asking appropriate questions and making "listening" sounds such as "Hmmm," "Oh," "Really?" "Darn!" "Wow!"

Validate your child's fears and feelings. When our children come to us with negative emotions, it's far too tempting to minimize them: "Oh, don't worry

about it." "There's nothing to be afraid of." These comments do much more harm than good. It's important for children to learn to trust their own feelings and to listen to them. By brushing them off, you're giving your child the message that his or her feelings are wrong or unimportant. You can validate your child's feelings instead with such comments as, "That sound embarrassing." "It can hurt to feel left out." "That must be frustrating."

Help your child to focus on possible solutions, rather than getting mired in the problem. If the situation isn't one that can be solved, if it's a condition rather than a problem, encourage your child to express his or her feelings fully, and then move on. Help your child use forward thinking phrases like, "I bet you wish...." or "Wouldn't it be nice if" or "What do you think you'll do now?"

Excerpted with permission by New Harbinger Publications, Inc. from Kid Cooperation, How to Stop Yelling, Nagging and Pleading and Get Kids to Cooperate by Elizabeth Pantley

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Often, just acknowledging a child's angry feeling will calm her down.

Children and Anger

"My child can't control her angry emotions. She tends to lash out at others, verbally and physically. How can I help her stop getting so angry?"

Your child needs to learn that while angry emotions are normal, there are acceptable and unacceptable ways of dealing with them. You can help your child learn this by acknowledging the reason she's angry. Often, just knowing that you understand her feelings can calm her down. As an example, what if your child is angry because her brother took her bike without asking, and she's yell-

ing uncontrollably? Calmly acknowledge the reason for her anger by saying something like, "I know it's frustrating when Alex takes your things without asking." This will often cause a pause in your child's behavior, as she ponders this new response from you. Next, ask a question that directs your child's thinking in a more productive way, "How do you think you can get him to remember to ask?" If she responds in an angry way, prompt her in a more positive direction, "Getting angry won't get your point across. What do you think will?" Stay with her and guide her

through the resolution process.

If however, your child's angry behavior is out of line, immediately stop her and send her to her room to cool off. Don't try to deal with the behavior at the peak of her anger. Later, when she's calmed down, take the time to let her know, specifically, what she did that you disapprove of. Engage her in a conversation to develop a plan for avoiding the behavior in the future.

Excerpted with permission by NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group Inc. from Perfect Parenting, The Dictionary of 1000 Parenting Tips by Elizabeth Pantley.

"A parent's support and involvement in a child's counselling process is of vital importance..."

The Therapeutic Process

The counselling process is an individual one and is different for each child. At Cameray, the counsellors respect the child's need to go at their own pace while providing a therapeutic environment. Children express their feelings in a number of different ways, including talking, art, play, and writing. Counselling at Cameray may incorporate any or all of these methods.

While the child's therapeutic process is individual, children generally do not heal in isolation.

Parents are often the most important people in a child's life. Therefore, their support and involvement in the child's process is of vital importance and regular meetings with the counsellor are necessary to explore parenting issues and other issues that may be affecting the child.

Some Guidelines to consider:

- 1) Do bring your child regularly. Consistency of attendance is of extreme importance in order for the child and counsellor to develop a trusting therapeutic

relationship.

- 2) Do not question a child regarding his/her counselling session.

- 3) Do not press a child to attend counselling or talk about particular issues with a counsellor. The child will address issues as he/she feels ready.

- 4) Do support your children as they courageously face their issues.

- 5) Do be open to participating in counselling yourself.



New project helps students transition to high school.

Cameray in the Community

Cameray Centre is pleased to announce a new Ministry of Children and Family Development funded project in the Burnaby School District. The project called "ACTS" (Assisting the Community with Transitioning Students) is an attempt to mentor, guide and build life skills with children in grades five to seven.

The activities and support given through this project will hopefully facilitate a more successful transition to high school for these students.

Cameray has hired J.J. Edwards as Activities Coordinator for the project. J.J. brings a wealth of experience working with youth and families in the city of Burnaby. He is creatively pursuing

avenues for after-school and evening programs to involve these children and build mentorship relationships.

We are certain he will be a valuable resource for the community, and that the project will be a success.

Community Kitchens in Full Swing

In partnership with New Westminster Family Place, Cameray Centre was awarded funding from the Fraser Health Authority for two new community kitchens. These two new kitchens are currently taking place at Olivet Baptist Church and Queensborough Community Centre on the last Wednesday and Thursday of every month.

Cameray's Partners in Parenting Program has been involved in community kitchens since 1998. It started with just one and approximately two years later Cameray merged with Family Services for an additional kitchen. And now with the

addition of two new kitchens, there are a total of four per month, all located in the New Westminster community.

The kitchens provide a great opportunity for parents to meet other parents, try new recipes, and learn to cook low cost and nutritious meals. Once the meals are prepared, each parent takes home their portion. Free childcare is also provided with a play space and lots of toys for the children. A staff member is available to ensure that the children are having fun and are well taken care of.

Pat Davison, a Home Visitor in

our Partners in Parenting Program has been coordinating community kitchens (with other community agencies) for the past six years. "I really love doing the kitchens. There are a lot of isolated families out there. The kitchens get parents together, they start making friends, and it gives them a bit of a break."

We welcome new families so please call at 604-520-0009 about availability and for more information.



The Kitchens give parents the opportunity to try new recipes, meet other parents and have some fun.

A Look into Cameray's Board Meetings

Board meetings are basically friendly but formal meetings with an agenda. Generally, we review the changes in the number of clients in the different programs, monitor the agency expenditures against the budget plan, and discuss personnel changes. Most decisions that involve money have to be discussed and approved by the Board as well as personnel changes. Usually, these discussions are directly related to the

Board developing a strategic plan for how Cameray will survive into the future and accommodate changes from government.

Occasionally, the Board will have a lively discussion regarding changes in some part of the policy manual but this has not been happening as much since completing the accreditation process. The Board meetings are also the place where Board members volunteer to take on tasks such as personnel selec-

tion and then report back on the process.

In the end, the Board meetings are where the hard decisions are made when that is necessary such as: what funding to seek, what costs to cut, what risks to take with new initiatives, and how to balance the concerns of clients, staff, management and the government.

Bruce Landon,
Board President

"the board meetings are where the hard decisions are made...."

What Our Families Have to Say....

Children:

What did you like about counselling? I like doing the stuff—playing lego, painting, and puppets. -age 4

What did you not like about counselling? We had to go home. -age 10

How has Cameray Centre been of assistance to you? It

has helped me become stronger and more independent inside. -age 14

What would you tell a friend about this place? It is the greatest place in the whole world. -age 7

Parents:

"The counsellor has been super for my son. She is a

special friend to him. "

"My daughter has been able to communicate better and express herself more openly."

"I really appreciate all the support that has been provided during the past year. It has helped us through a lot of difficult times. Thank-you."





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MISSION STATEMENT:

Cameray Centre is a community-based agency committed to the strengthening of individuals and families through support, counselling, education, outreach, and advocacy. We are a non-profit agency serving Burnaby and New Westminster residents since 1972.

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The Child & Youth Specialized Victim Support Program

The Child & Youth Victim Support program, offered through Cameray Centre, is only one of two victim support programs in Burnaby and New Westminster specifically designed for children, youth and their non-offending family members. The program's mandate is to provide services to children and youth who are victims or witnesses to any crime, defined by the Criminal Code of Canada. In Canada children as young as 3 years of age can be subpoenaed to attend court to offer testimony. This is a shocking fact, but at 3 a child does have some basic language skills, they can point, use diagrams and dolls, they can draw and color, and show what happened to them. There is nothing more frightening to a child than to be abused or witnesses someone being hurt. Over the past 15 years Canadian courts have been trying to make testifying for children a bit easier. For children and teens 17 years of age or younger, some new tools that

have been implemented for the courtroom are: children may testify behind a screen, be in another room via closed circuit television, use videotaped testimony, or hearsay evidence can be used (information told by the child and shared by someone else.) To implement one of the testifying aides, Crown Counsel submits an application to the court, and the decision is left with the Judge.

Services provided by the Child & Youth Specialized Victim Support Program are:

- Advocacy and support for children/youth and their non-offending family members
- Crisis intervention
- Police/Court file updates
- Attend police and Crown Counsel interviews
- Liaison with Police, Crown Counsel and other criminal justice personnel

- Attend the SANE clinic or Children's Hospital with clients
- Provide a minimum of 6 court preparation sessions
- Provide court accompaniment during the Preliminary Inquiry and trial
- Schedule a debriefing session after court
- Assist completing Crime Assistance forms and Victim Impact Statements
- Provide referral to appropriate community resources
- Offer transportation to meetings, medical exams and court dates

All services are free and voluntary. Referrals may come from any source, and at any stage during the criminal justice process. For more information about the Child & Youth Specialized Victim Support Program please call 604-612-5296.

Theresa Cecchetto, Victim Services.