

# Family Dialogue

Unlock the mystery of dialogue for your children by introducing them to “family dialogue”. This is a wonderful tool for cultivating family relationships and opening the lines of communication. It can sometimes be difficult for parents to accept a child’s feelings, so it’s important to create an environment of trust in family dialogue. Take extra care to avoid triggering a defensive response by correcting, criticizing, judging, or telling a child not to feel a certain way.

**Process:** While the process is similar to couple dialogue, family dialogue usually calls for more flexibility. The frequency depends on each family’s situation - anywhere from once a week to once a month. Do whatever works for your family! Choose a question that is relatable to everyone. (Holidays or special events are usually a good place to start.) You might let the children take turns choosing a question.

**Write:** Separate to write. Each family member spends 10 minutes writing about their strongest feeling about the question (or in the case of little ones, drawing a picture to illustrate how they feel). Thoughts or opinions about the question should be kept to only 2 or 3 sentences. The majority of the time should be spent describing their strongest feeling.

**Exchange:** Each family member reads their letter aloud (or describes their picture) - or you may choose to exchange the letters or pictures among all family members.

**Dialogue:** There is no right or wrong way for HOW to family dialogue – just remember that feelings are still the focus and listening is the key. Keep the atmosphere warm and loving – and DO thank everyone for participating!

**Select:** End by selecting a date and a question for your next family dialogue.