UNIT 3  INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

Let’s look at the following situations:

Raju, aged 10 years, was taking his Hindi book out of the desk when the lid slipped and slammed shut. Ms. Mehta, the teacher screamed, “You careless boy, always creating a disturbance.” A little while later Raju slammed shut the lid again; this time on purpose.

The fourth standard children were eating lunch in the recess. Some were playing. While trying to catch Ravi, Suraj pushed Shalu and split her food. Shalu was in tears. Ms. Ahmed who saw what was happening called them both. She wiped Shalu’s tears and said, “Suraj didn’t mean to push you, let’s see what we can do now”. Suraj and his friends offered to share their food with Shalu. In a short while all the children were back at play.

As teachers and parents you may have often seen or even been involved in a variety of similar situations. You may have responded in some of the ways described above or in other different ways. The point is we do respond and react. We say and do different things in different situations i.e., we communicate. Similarly, children and other adults also respond and communicate with us. This sending back and forth of messages is interpersonal communication. In this unit we will learn to communicate more effectively so that we can help children function more effectively.
3.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- identify different ways of communication;
- state the influence that each way of communicating has on the child's personality;
- recognize the type of communication being used in given description of adult-child interaction;
- distinguish between and give examples of effective and ineffective ways of communicating;
- recognize the influence of other factors like nonverbal behaviours, language situation, the background of the person talking, etc. influence communication;
- suggest ways of coping with problems that come out of interpersonal conflicts, and
- suggest and use skills proactive of communication to develop cooperation amongst parents and teachers.

3.3 WHAT IS INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION?

3.3.1 You are always Communicating

Communication means sending and receiving messages. Even without our noticing it or being aware of it we often send messages about we think and feel to people around us and also receive messages from them. How do we send these messages? If we look at the examples given in 3.1 again, we may quickly identify the teachers as senders of messages because they are talking.

But what about Raju who (without saying a word) sent a message to the teacher by letting his desk lid fall purposely the second time?

Was Ms. Ahmed also sending a message when she wiped Shalu’s tears?

In these examples we can see two ways in which we can send and receive messages.

1. Verbal - through what we say; tone of our voice
2. Non-verbal - through the expression on our face, our manners (the way we sit and stand).

Even when we choose to remain silent we communicate non verbally, i.e., without the use of words. For example, if we decide to ignore a fight that is taking place around us, we may be communicating our desire to say out of the fight.

This brings us to another aspect of communication. Are we really getting across the message we want to get across?

Check Your Progress

Note: a) Compare your answers with the those given at the end of the block.

1. See Table 1. Here are some situations. For each one, identify (1) who sent the message, (2) how it was sent and (3) what you think the message means. This exercise has been done for the situation number one:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Who is sending the message</th>
<th>How is the message being sent? Verbal/Non-Verbal</th>
<th>Possible underlying message(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 8 yrs old Priya to Sonia – “I want</td>
<td>Priya</td>
<td>Verbally</td>
<td>(a) I like your pencil and want to keep it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While you were looking out this exercise you must have noticed that in all the situations all the people were involved in sending messages. Sometimes the underlying messages may have been the same as the ones that were apparent at first glance in the situation and at other times there may have been some addition to the verbal message. In other situation (3) you would have observed that there was an inconsistency in the messages given by the person (i.e., the two messages seemed to be saying two different things). That is, Mary's mother called her naughty, but her laughter indicted acceptance.

All these different aspects of the effective communication will be taken up in the following sections.

### 3.3.2 Communication is a Two-Way Street/Path

So far the focus was on sending messages. Sometimes we act as if the business of sending messages was a one-way street.

We forget that we are sending messages to a person and that person is sending messages back to us. Everybody is sending and receiving messages. In situation 1 (table 3.1) Sonia's turning away from Priya and continues with her work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sonia</th>
<th>Non-verbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>goes up to his teacher and shows the picture he has painted, teacher looks at the picture and smiles at him.</td>
<td>(a) I don't want to give it to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giggling as she climbs up a tree, Mother (standing below the tree) laughs, &quot;you naughty girl. I really don't know what to do with you.&quot;</td>
<td>(b) I don't have a red pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) ................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. 7 yrs. old Parag goes up to his teacher and shows the picture he has painted, teacher looks at the picture and smiles at him.

3. 10 yrs. old Mary is giggling as she climbs up a tree, Mother (standing below the tree) laughs, "you naughty girl. I really don't know what to do with you."

Take situation 2 in the same table. The teacher responded by smiling to Parag's (action) message. What do you think will happen now? Perhaps, Parag will walk away with a smile on his face and may start painting another picture. In turn they both have had an influence on each other.

### Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given.

b) Compare your answers with the those given at the end of the block.

2. Let us try to imagine what happens (i.e. what kind of response will be given) in a different situation.
Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Likely (possible) response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Parag takes his picture to the teacher, pushes it in front of her and keeps pulling at her hand to draw her attention away from the other children she is talking to.</td>
<td>Teacher’s likely response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When Parag starts walking towards the teacher she says, “Don’t get up from your seat in the middle of the classes.”</td>
<td>1. .............................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teacher looks at Parag’s painting and exclaims, “What’s this? Don’t you know that elephants are grey, not green”.</td>
<td>2. .............................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Irrespective of what alternative responses you imagined, the fact still remains that they were reactions. This sending back and forth of messages (each one affecting the one that comes after it from the other person) is what communication is all about.

So, if we want to achieve (get) certain goals (responses) we have to be careful about the way we send messages. We need to realize that other people’s messages also have an effect on us.

3.3.3 The Adult’s Role – Communicating Love, Understanding and Acceptance

As adults we cannot just sit back and say, “well, I’m going to (respond) talk in a particular way because somebody said or did something”. This attitude reflects a reaction to a situation. However, when we are trying to help young children we need to think ahead and try to anticipate what may happen. As teachers and parents we need to use our knowledge about how communication works to modify what messages we send and the way in which we react to other people’s messages. Our messages and responses (our communication) can and should be used to help children develop in many ways. By communicating effectively we can help children develop in many ways. By communicating effectively we can help children understand the world around them. By modelling different ways of communicating we can help them recognize and express more effectively their thoughts and feelings. By communicating love and acceptance we can help them feel good about themselves and help develop certain self-esteem. Have you seen an 8-year-old playing “student-teacher” and tapping the ruler on the table just the way her teacher does. Have you seen a 10-year-old comforting his younger sister with the same words that his father uses?

Children pick up ways of communication from adults. We often see children imitating adults in the way they talk and behave, i.e., adults become models for children to learn from. Also it is important that they feel good about themselves – feel that they are capable enough to achieve their goals. As adults we can help them feel this way by showing them that we care.

How can we communicate love, understanding and acceptance?

Take a look again at situation 3 in table 3.2, the teacher’s remark – “What’s this? Don’t you know elephants are grey”? This remark is unlikely to communicate acceptance to the child. You would probably agree that the intention behind the teacher’s remark was probably not to make the child feel bad but to draw his attention to the “real” situation i.e., that elephants are grey and not green in colour. But with this remark, particularly in harsh tone, intention is not achieved. (Parag feels that he is not insulted, just his picture is rejected).

Suppose the teacher had said the above remark in a softer tone, “I noticed that you have coloured the elephant green”. Parag’s reaction would probably not have been hurt in this situation.

Let’s look at a few more examples.

a) When a nine-year-old girl gets into a fight and comes back hurt and crying, we could say “would you like to tell me what happened” instead of “big girls don’t cry” or “you are always fighting”.

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b) Eleven-year-old Rohit is working out a puzzle. He has already been at it for 15 minutes. Given below are three possible responses. Pick the one that you think most effectively communicates the message that you appreciate him and the effect he is making.

i) “Why don’t you put this away? It’s too hard for you”.

ii) “You’ve got half of it finished”.

iii) “You’d better finish this fast because it’s almost time for dinner.”

The second response is obviously a more desirable and helpful one. It shows an acceptance of the child and his work without giving unrealistic praise.

Check Your Progress

Note: a) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

3. For the following situations select the response you think is most appropriate.

i) Sheetal goes to the teacher, as she walks very late into the class, and says “good morning” and gives her a rose with a shy smile.

a) Teacher accepts the rose and goes back to taking attendance.

b) Teacher smiles at Sheetal and says “Thank You”.

c) Teacher smiles, says “Thank You” and “Now get to your seat quickly. I hope you won’t be late again”.

d) Teacher says “Don’t think you can make up for being late by giving me flowers”.

ii) For the situation given below, identify which response(s) indicate(s) acceptance.

The teacher notices that Mohit has been trying to answer a question but other children are always quicker than him and raise their hands first. Possible responses:

a) Teacher asks another question – waits to see if Mohit wants to answer it and then lets him do so.

b) Teacher notices Mohit’s raised hand and says, “Mohit has been wanting to answer for quite some time. Let us give him a chance”.

c) Teacher ignores Mohit and continues to ask any child who raises his hand first to answer the question.

d) Even though Prakash has already answered, the teacher says – “Mohit, would you like to tell us if you agree with this or not”?

3.4 HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE?

(Disciplining styles)

3.4.1 Being Loving – Being Hostile; Being Accepting – Being Rejecting

In the earlier section we have talked about the need to show children that we love and accept them. The remarks that we make while talking to children show our love and acceptance of them. Sometimes our remarks show our hostility, anger and rejection.

None of us is always or completely loving or completely hostile, completely accepting or completely rejecting. Probably we are somewhere in between these two extremes.

WHICH AM I MORE LIKE?

However, having realized that communicating love and acceptance are important for the child’s development, we can attempt to be more aware of what we say and how we say it. We can try to communicate to children that we care, love and accept them.
Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answer in the space given below.
   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

4. Classify each of the given statement in Table 3.3 into those that communicate
   A) Love – Acceptance
   B) Hostility – Rejection
   The first one has been completed, as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am happy to see you.</td>
<td>Love – Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I’ve enjoyed playing with you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. You never learn you’re good for nothing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I like the way you handled that.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What do you think you are? We never had all these things when we were young.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Go to your room and don’t disturb me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It looks as if you’re really taken a lot of effort to complete that.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think now about the kind of statements you generally use while communicating with children. Although we may respond differently in different situations, we stick to a certain pattern. If we are loving and accepting that will be apparent in most of our communication. Similarly, if we are rejecting it will be reflected in our everyday communication. Sometimes, for convenience, we can classify these patterns of communicating (relating to children) into three types.

3.4.2 Listen to Me – or Else: The Authoritarian Pattern

WHAT DOES THIS STATEMENT CONVEY TO YOU?

Now look at the statement given above. This reflects an authoritarian approach in the adult’s way of communicating. Given below is an illustration of an authoritarian remark; the message the child is likely to receive as well as the feelings such a remark is likely to arouse. Perhaps we should think about whether this is the effect we want to have.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Message the child receives</th>
<th>Feelings it arouses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “If you don’t put away your toys immediately you are going to get a beating”</td>
<td>I have to listen because Mummy is more powerful than I am.</td>
<td>Resentment annoyance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The authoritarian approach means that the teacher/parent is in-charge. S/he is the authority and controls the situation. Big and small decisions are taken by the authority figure and children are expected to follow instructions and obey without question. Order is usually maintained more easily when this is the basic pattern of relating to children. However, there is very little opportunity for initiative on the part of children or for them to decide and choose for themselves. Children may either become submissive and obey the adult without question or become defiant/rebellious.

IS THIS THE EFFECT WE WANT TO HAVE?

3.4.3 “It’s Alright – Do Whatever you Want To”; The Permissive Pattern

What you see in this approach is the other extreme. From complete control reflected in a rigid authoritarian approach we shift to complete lack of control – license – freedom in the permissive approach.
This approach is reflected in parent/teacher remarks and behaviours such as:

1. “Whatever you do is alright”.
2. Parent to child whose eyes are drooping but doesn’t want to go to sleep “you can stay up and watch TV if you want to”.
3. Teacher ignoring a fist fight that is developing in the play ground.

Can you think of other examples of this approach?

Have you seen a child who visits your house, wanders around picking up things one after another, spilling something, breaking another and the parent don’t say a word?

In an extremely permissive style of communication it is as though parents and teachers have no leadership to offer. Although they may provide specific help when asked, they usually stay out of everything. In a classroom situation this may create a situation where a child, even if s/he wants to work, is prevented from doing so by other members of the groups.

What needs to be considered, therefore, is the effectiveness of such an approach. Children do, in fact, need to have some limits placed on their actions. Otherwise they may feel insecure; not being sure whether adults will stop them from getting into dangerous situations. Children may either become:

1. Insecure or
2. Dominating – always insisting on getting their way.

### 3.4.4 Lets Us See If We Can Sort This Out Together – The Democratic/Participative Pattern

What does this approach say to you?

Now look at the statements given below. What messages would a child receive from them? What feelings these statements are likely to arouse?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher to 5th standard class, “we have to decide about the class picnic. We can either go to the Zoo or to the lake. Which one you think we should prefer?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. “Sheila has been having a lot of difficulties. How do you think we can help her?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “Meena has made a suggestion. What do you think about it?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The message that children are likely to receive from such a statement made by the teacher is that their opinions count, are of value. This also makes them feel more competent and accepted.

These statements reflect a democratic/participative approach. The teacher or parent creates situation where children can be helped to take decisions about various things. Everybody’s needs are taken into account. Even when the decisions are taken by the adult it is after a discussion where the children are taken into confidence and given reasons and explanations for why and how something has to be done. Such an approach usually requires more time in terms of getting things done as compared to the efficiency and order that is often the result of the authoritarian approach. However, decisions made through such mutual discussion are usually adhered to by children irrespective of whether or not an adult is present to supervise their work.

### 3.4.5 Which Approach would You Like to Use?

As you can see there is no absolute criterion that you can apply to say that certain patterns of communicating are better than others. All of them have their own strengths and weaknesses.
What can help us decide which approach to (adopt) use are the effects they have on children immediately as well as in the long term. Certainly there may be a number of situations in which we cannot leave decision making to children or even involve them in its making. However, what we may aim at is an appropriate mix of these communication styles. In this context we may want to consider yet another approach i.e., the authoritative approach.

As adult we may have more information, more insight into the possible consequences of certain actions. Because of this we may often take decisions and ask a child to abide by them (follow them). However, the difference between being authoritative and being authoritarian (as in the first approach) is that the decisions taken by the adults are not just imposed on the child. For example, when a parent decides that is not appropriate for the child to play outside after 7 p.m. s/he also has a lot of reasons behind this (you want the child to wash up, relax before dinner, you want them to help with household work, finish their homework; you think they might fall down and hurt themselves in the dark, etc.). Children do need guidance because when adults do not set limits children feel insecure. It is possible and also necessary to be firm without humiliating or ridiculing the child. Instead of "If you don’t put your toys away, you are going to get beatings", we could say, "It is now almost dinner time. You have 10 minutes more to put away your toys. So you’ll have to hurry".

In the authoritative approach while you may communicate your decision to the child in very clear terms, you would also provide the reasons behind that decision of yours. This makes it more likely that children will understand/accept and follow these messages and decisions.

Another aspect that needs to be considered is whether or not we are consistent in the approach we use. If we keep switching from one style to another, children may become confused because they do not know what to expect from you.

Also, what should be taken into account are the needs of specific children. A particular child may be mature/capable enough to decide for herself/himself. Another child may require more direction and guidance. However, their ability to choose, to be responsible for themselves gradually increases especially when we provide them opportunities to do so.

**Check Your Progress**

**Note:** a) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

5. Identify the approach that is reflected in the given statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement/situation</th>
<th>Authoritarian/Permissive/Democratic and Participative/Authoritative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher to child: &quot;Do as you are told and don't argue&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teacher to child: &quot;You have a suggestion. What do you think about it, Gorup?&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teacher to child: &quot;Don't you need to get dressed fast enough? You will miss the school bus.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. &quot;You must keep your books in the shelf the way I've shown you&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. An 8-year-old boy has found some rusted nails and is playing with them. The teacher sees him but does not say anything.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Teacher to children: &quot;She is finding some difficulty in completing her assignment after her illness. How do you think we can help her?&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Teacher to children: &quot;Take 'catch' in the room. This game is too rough for indoor play. Some of you could get hurt. If you want to play this, go out to the ground.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 HOW CAN WE COMMUNICATE MORE EFFECTIVELY?

In the earlier sections we have focused to a large extent on the sending of messages. Let us now turn our attention to some other aspects of communication.

3.5.1 Really Listening : Appropriate Responding

In order to communicate really effectively we also have to receive messages more effectively. This involves the skills of listening and responding in ways that will show we have understood the message.

Look at the conversations that follow. Would you say that the adults in these situations were really listening? Why? Why not?

Table 3.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Was the adult listening? Yes/No</th>
<th>Your reason(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher to child who comes crying to her after a fight “You are a fighter cock. How many times have I told you not to fight.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Child to Parent “Can I go and play with Geeta”? Parent “Play, play, play, can’t you think of anything else”?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Child to Parent/Teacher (excitedly) “Ranjit’s father got him a new bat. We’re going to play with it this evening.” Teacher/Parent “You sound really excited.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Child to Teacher - “Look at this picture I made for you.” Teacher “Thank you, I like the bright colours you’ve used.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You may have identified the adults in situations 1 and 2 as not really listening and the adults in situations 3 and 4 as listening. On what basis can we draw this conclusion? If we take a close look at both situations 1 and 2 and focus on the adult’s statements, you will notice that they are unconnected to the child’s message. For example, in situation 1 the child has come with the hurt feeling wanting comfort which the adult has not provided. The statement “you’re a fighter cock” does not indicate acceptance.

Similarly in situation 2, the child’s question could have been answered with a “yes, you may” or “No, it’s too late now” or “Not right now, you need to finish your work first” etc.

In contrast in situations 3 and 4, the adults recognize the child’s message and express it in their own words. In fact one way of making sure that we understand the message the way it was meant by the sender is to check out/clarify our interpretation of that message through a question or statement.

Listening does not just mean sitting and hearing a person talk. It means responding appropriately to the person’s verbal or non-verbal message. When we listen effectively we also communicate understanding and acceptance. This listening was demonstrated by the adults in situations 3 and 4.

3.5.2 Helping Children Recognize and Express their Thoughts and Feelings

Many a times children have difficulties in saying what they think and feel. Adults can respond to their part verbal and part non-verbal messages to help them become clear about their thoughts and feelings and to further express these.

Expressing feelings is sometimes particularly difficult. Even we adults sometimes do not know what we are feeling. This is even more so in the case of children.
Take for example the following situation. Radha is at her desk, working out mathematics sums. Every couple of minutes she looks up and about, opens her pencil box, sharpens her pencil, rubs her eraser on the desk, etc.

What of the following teacher remarks do you think would help her to recognize her feelings?

1. “What's the matter? Why can't you sit still”?
2. “You seem very restless today?”.

If you chose the second remark you were using your listening skills to pick up on her non-verbal behaviour and then naming it viz., “restless”. Such verbalization of feeling helps children understand and cope with their feelings more effectively.

One of the reasons we find it difficult to express our feelings in words is that our vocabulary of “feeling words” is limited. For example, we tend to use only basic feeling words like “angry”, “said”, etc. Perhaps we may sometimes add or take away from how strongly we feel that way by adding the words – “very” or “a little”.

There are three aspects about the verbalization of feelings that you may want to consider:

1. The intensity with which we feel something, i.e. how strongly do I feel it?
2. What is it that we are feeling? For example, if a child almost falls down the stairs and we catch him and start shouting, “Can't you be more careful”?: etc. are we really feeling anger? Or are we hiding our relief that he hasn't been hurt? Even as adults we often find it difficult to recognize what exactly our feelings are.
3. Expressing our feelings in constructive ways. For example, “I feel annoyed” is likely to get a better response because the person to whom the message is sent does not feel defensive as they would, if we were to say “you're wrong – you always do things in such a slipshod manner”.

In order to help children recognize and express their feelings we first need to recognize and express our own in more effective ways. We can then act as models. This job of expressing feelings can become easier if we are able to use “feeling words” that show a variation in both the type as well as intensity of feelings.

Table 3.8 provides a short list of different feeling words. Think of other words that you can add to each category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Happy</th>
<th>Ecstatic</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>Depressed</td>
<td>Uneasy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>Infuriated</td>
<td>Fed up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scared</td>
<td>Terrified</td>
<td>Started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Dazed</td>
<td>Puzzled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Exhausted</td>
<td>Incapable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Touched</td>
<td>Invincible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These words can then be used to:

1. Model the expression of feelings. For example, “I'm overjoyed at the prospect of going for the picnic.
2. Verbalize the feelings that a child may be expressing only through their behaviour or partially through a few words. For example “You get upset when your hand is nudged while you are writing” or “you are pleased about finishing your arithmetic sums so fast:”

When we verbalize feelings we help children by giving them a way of effectively coping with those feelings as well. The feelings (even negative ones) can find an outlet in words without having to rely only on non-verbal behaviour (frowning, etc.) that may be interpreted in several ways.
Factors Influencing Development

Check Your Progress

Note: a) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

6. Given below are several situations/statements by children. Each situation is followed by various responses. Select the response that you think is the most appropriate one(s) for an adult to make:

i) Matt is making a request for craft class. She has been struggling with a task for some time but the teacher has told Matt not to bother them.
   a) Teacher: "Hurry up and finish your work first. I'm not going to spend another minute on this."
   b) Teacher: "Just let it be! You will spoil it even more by doing and redoing it!"
   c) Teacher: "Can I help?"
   d) Teacher: "Sit down next to her. You can become satisfied with the way that's working out."

ii) Seven-year-old Karim approached his class teacher and told his teacher that he has a new baby sister. Of course she's still alive now. She has been crying.
   Teacher:
   a) How exciting, you must be thrilled.
   b) You sound quite happy about this.
   c) Well she's only a baby. You'll have to wait till she grows up.
   d) You sound excited. You must be learning a lot about what babies are like.
   e) Yes, and you are her big brother so you must take care of her.

3.6 WHAT ELSE INFLUENCES YOUR INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS?

A number of factors can influence how we interpret the messages we receive. One of these is the non-verbal behaviour of the person sending the message. Sometimes the non-verbal behaviour may be the complete message and sometimes it may accompany with the person says.

Check Your Progress

Note: a) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

7. Given below are several non-verbal behaviours. In the columns provided write down two different things that it could mean. The first one has been completed as an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non Verbal Behaviour</th>
<th>Its Meaning</th>
<th>Alternative Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tapping a pencil on the desk.</td>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>Trying to catch someone's attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Looking downwards while some one is talking.</td>
<td>Paying respect; feeling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
That apart from the nonverbal behaviour the situation in which the communication is taking place, the person who is sending the message, in what kind of tone the message is being sent, etc. also influence how we interpret these messages.

Even when the message sent is mostly verbal, these factors have an effect. For example, one parent is more likely to accept and pay attention to the suggestion of another parent in terms of bringing up children than if these suggestions are made by a young teenage girl. Here, it is the parent's similar experiences and background that make him/her more acceptable as an advisor.

The tone in which a message is sent also influences how that message will be received.

Try saying aloud this statement (as if to a 10 year old) first in an angry tone, then in a soft, gentle tone.

"Pack your bag before you go to sleep".

The impact is likely to be different. Quite often we are irritated when people "lecture" us even though they obviously know what they are talking about. But when the same idea is conveyed in words we are familiar with and in a tone that encourage discussion, we usually respond more positively.

Being aware of how these factors influence communication can help us both in sending and receiving messages more effectively.

Check Your Progress

Note: a) Compare your answers with the those given at the end of the block.
8. Which of the meaning listed do you think is not likely fit in the situations given below?
   i) Child restless in chair. The time is about 12 noon towards the end of math's class.
       a) uninterested in the lesson going on
       b) wants to go to the bathroom
       c) is hungry, and is waiting for the bell of the lunch recess to ring.
       d) hasn't completed his homework for the next class and is trying to think of what excuse to give.

3.7 TEACHERS AND PARENTS: “LET'S WALK HAND IN HAND”

We are reminded of the famous song “We shall over come some day” and specifically this verse “We’ll walk hand in hand” in the context of cooperation amongst Teachers and Parents. Perhaps this could become our theme song in the joint effort of parents and teachers to facilitate the development of the child. The main concern of parents and teacher is that children become capable and happy. They need each others cooperation. Yet, very often they seem stuck on different sides of the fence.

If we are really to be able to help our children achieve their potential, we as parents and teachers will have to function (work) as partners. The collaboration between parents and teachers can be greatly enhanced and made effective depending on the interpersonal communication between these two groups.

Let's take a look at some remarks made by teachers and parents to each other. Think of how you would feel if these remarks were addressed to you. How effective do you think these messages would be in getting cooperation from parents and teachers?

1. Teacher to parent: “You must supervise Rahul’s studies every day. He is very weak in all subjects. If he fails in the examination, don’t blame me.”

2. Circular sent to parents: Parents are hereby notified that students coming to class in improper uniform or without books will be detained after school.
3. Parent to Teacher: “After all why do we send our children to school. It’s your responsibility to make sure they understand.”

Probably most of these remarks which are at best (2) impersonal and at worst hurtful (1) and (3) to the parent’s or teacher’s ego, will not be very helpful.

Let’s try and rephrase these messages keeping in mind that parents and teachers are not rivals. They would like to share information with each other so that the child can be helped.

1. Teachers to parents: “I’m very concerned about Rahul. He is such a friendly, helpful child. He needs help in his studies though. I was wondering if we could both find a way to help him”.

2. Circular sent home to parents: We would like to share our observations with you. Quite often children are missing their badge or tie. Sometimes they forget to bring their books. As you will agree, this can have an impact on the overall work and discipline. We would like you to think about this and bring suggestions on handling this at the next P.T.A. meeting on the 20th February.

3. Parents to Teacher: “With your special training I feel you would be able to explain this to my daughter in a much better way. However, if you could suggest something specific for me to do with her at home, I’ll do my best”.

These rephrased communication responses are likely to be more helpful. They indicate mutual respect and regard for each other’s efforts. More cooperation and involvement of parents and teachers can then be expected.

Let us also remember that, instead of communicating with parents or teachers only when things go wrong, we can also try to share information about things that go right.

Perhaps we could send a “Smilogram” to a parent. It might look something like this.

Dear Mrs. Singh
Thank you for helping Kiran with her science lessons. She can now help some of the children
Mrs. Mehta
(Class teacher)

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given.
   b) Compare your answers with the those given at the end of the block.

9. Which of the listed responses to the following situation do you think would facilitate parent-teacher relationships?

   i) Mother has come to discuss her 10 years old child’s progress. She is upset because the child is having difficulty in English (second language).

   Teacher:
   a) I’ve told you a long time back that Ajit is very weak in English. It’s your responsibility to help him.
   b) You should send him to tuition classes.
   c) “I’m glad you’ve come to discuss your son’s work. Perhaps we can find ways to help him increase his vocabulary. Do you have any suggestions?”
   d) “All the children are having the same difficulty. Ajit is no different”.

   Write your response to the following situation that you think would help facilitate parent-teacher relationships.

   .................................................................
   .................................................................
   .................................................................
3.8 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER USING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVELY

If the proceeding sections we have been looking at various aspects of communication. Why have we been doing this? Most of us would expect to be also to see this information so that we can communicate more effectively in our personal and work lives.

We could in the end, look at our own pattern of communication (3.3) and see what effects they are having on our communication. You may even observe that sometimes you are upset and hassled because though you want smooth, harmonious relationships which do not seem easy to achieve. You find yourself getting annoyed and start scolding instead of being able to explain things calmly. When children “misbehave” continuously you find yourself unable to change what’s happening. You want cooperation from parents and teachers but all you find are arguments and disagreements.

Some of you may even have attempted to bring about some change in the way you communicate, hoping that the relationship will improve. And yet “old habits die hard”. We may find ourselves using the same, ineffective ways of communicating. We learn to communicate at an early age and our ways of doing so tend to get into a pattern. Usually a change requires a lot of conscious and systematic efforts. There are techniques that we can learn that will help us bring about these harmonious relationships. Some of these we have studied in this unit and others we will be learning in the unit on Effective Communication in the course NES-103: Guiding Children’s Learning.

However, at this point we can definitely aim at recognizing effective and ineffective communication. We can also start making some changes in the way we communicate. Based on our analyses of certain situations we can learn/suggest ways of handling it more effectively.

3.9 LET US SUM UP

We have looked at various aspects of communication and learnt to make distinctions between effective and ineffective communication. One of the major purposes of what we have studied is to become aware of our styles of communicating and its possible impact.

As adults (teachers and parents) dealing with children we need to take the initiative to present good role models. We also need to use the skills of sending and receiving messages in ways that will increase children’s self esteem and help them to develop.

We do, however, need to be on guard about ways of communication that have become a habit. Conscious effort is needed to develop skills of effective communication.
3.10 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Ms. Mohite was concerned because she often seemed to lose her temper with her III standard children just before the lunch recess. Their impatience to go to the playground was irritating her as they would start moving about and shift around in their chairs, making it difficult for her to finish her explanation. Because of this she often detains them for a big part of the recess period. Suggest ways in which she should handle the situation.

2. Ms. Singh noticed that 11 years Virendra always got left out of group games and would roam around alone looking lost and lonely. She wanted to help him. Which are the following ways would you suggest to Ms. Singh (may be more than one way).
   a) Play with him.
   b) Go and tell other children to play with him.
   c) Give him things to do that he liked/enjoyed and could do alone.
   d) Talk to Virendra and the children separately to find out why he was not being included.
   e) Observe the children talking to Virendra at other time to find out what could be the cause.

3. The school that you teach in is planning to expand the library facilities. You would like some help from the parents. Write a response that you feel would likely get their cooperation.

4. Observe and list some of the 10-15 remarks you make in class/home while talking to children (over an hour period).
   a) Identify the kind of communication you used.
   b) Note if there seems to be a certain consistency in the type of messages you send.
   c) Observe and note children’s responses to these statements. Do they seem similar to what you studied about in this unit?
      (If a tape recorder is available you may wish to tape your conversation and identify the remarks based on the record).

5. One of the goals of effective communication (verbal and nonverbal) is to help children feel good about themselves, i.e. to increase their self-esteem.

List two ways in which you can do this.
Try it out with children. See what impact it has on:
   a) encouraging them in their efforts.
   b) recognizing/acknowledging their behaviour when they do something right.
   c) showing them with a hug or pat on the back that you care.
   d) listening to them carefully when they talk to you.