



# Every Child a Talker

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**Talking and interacting with children,  
influencing parents and creating a positive  
atmosphere in your setting: Ten 'Golden Rules'  
for adults**

How can we influence parents so that they talk positively with their children? How can we create a calm and positive atmosphere in our setting? How can we help children to behave positively towards each other?

Many settings and schools have 'Golden Rules' that tell children how they are expected to behave. These are displayed prominently for all the adults and children to see. But who sets the rules for how *adults* should behave? In your setting, for example, you might avoid using the word 'naughty', but does everyone know why you do it, and what should they say instead?

Parents often look to practitioners to support them with children's behaviour at home. We might like to start them thinking about the way that they talk with their children: perhaps they raise their voice a lot, or give orders, or tell their children what *not* to do, rather than showing them how they should behave.

One school asked these questions, and came up with a powerful idea: setting 'Golden Rules' for how staff should behave. Grangewood Special School caters for children with severe and profound learning needs; but their principles can be applied in all schools and settings.

Sit in a circle and imagine that you have a child from your setting in the middle. He can be a four year old or a baby. If he could tell you, how do you think he would like to be treated by you? At Grangewood the staff came up with 10 statements, written from a child's point of view. These are displayed prominently throughout the school, and in the lobby for all visitors to see. They are in the school brochure, and are the basis for all staff induction. The staff try and abide by these rules in the way that they talk with the children throughout the day. It has had a spectacular impact on how staff and children communicate. Could this work in your setting? It's a great idea, and parents, who watch practitioners very closely and follow what we do more than what we say, may be influenced by your interaction with their children.

## **10 Golden Rules:**

- **"Treat me with respect and dignity.**
- **Talk to me, not about me.**
- **Listen to what I have to say.**
- **Give me time to respond and interact in my own way.**
- **Try to understand me: I can't always understand my feelings.**
- **Stay calm with me, even if I do not stay calm with myself.**
- **Allow me to make choices and decisions for myself.**
- **Let me know what's going to happen.**
- **Help me to stay safe.**
- **Telling me what I am good at builds my confidence."**

To explore these ideas Google '*Ten golden rules for adults*' and find the 'Teaching Expertise' article by Michael Jones