

# Communication Tip No. 3: Keeping Multitasking to a Minimum

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We live in a busy world. Work, family, social obligations, volunteering and ministry are all important. As a mom of two small (and very active) boys who also works from home for three different non-profits, I know that multitasking can be necessary. But, I've also realized that my kids recognize when I'm not giving them my full attention. And, as discussed in previous communication tips, if the children we serve are going to trust us with more serious matters (such as disclosing abuse), they first must see that we are truly listening to them.

The following are just a few thoughts to ponder when multitasking around children:

1. **What is more essential right now?** Sometimes listening to a child is the best thing I can be doing, other times it is, for example, paying attention to traffic to keep everyone safe!
2. **Can it wait?** Especially with instant electronic communications, it's tempting to think that every text/phone call/email needs an answer immediately, but that is often not the case.
3. **Do I interrupt a conversation with a child to pay attention to something else?** Usually without realizing it, I can show a lack of respect to a child by starting something new without finishing our conversation.
4. **Can I better organize my time/priorities?** One of things I do to combat multitasking around my kids is to schedule my tasks ahead of time. In this way, I am able to give some undivided attention to my kids each day, while reserving other times to fit in work and fit in other things such as chores.
5. **Do I schedule one on one time with the kids in my care?** Rather than give kids attention in between other activities, time with them should be a priority. It could be as simple as talking over hot chocolate or taking a walk around the park.
6. **Am I teaching children through my example?** By paying more attention to social media than children, I am teaching them to do the same. By listening attentively to them, I try to model the right way to treat others.

At times, life is a constant balancing act. However, by giving priority to the children in our lives, we can demonstrate to them that they are valued and that they can rely on us as trusted adults in their lives.