



Communicating with your kids



A 5-point checklist

If you and your partner have kids, it's important to think about how to communicate with them too. How much or how little you want to share with them about police work obviously needs to be tailored to their age, ability and understanding.

However, here are five general considerations to help you develop a communication style that works for everyone.

1 Should you be proactive or reactive?

You might decide it's better only to provide information if and when your child asks. Sharing too much without them asking could do more harm than good.

2 Adopting a consistent approach

If there's a big age gap between your children, you might want to think about whether you share any information about policing at all. The last thing you want is for younger kids to hear something from a sibling second-hand that might worry them.

3 Using the right tone and language

Think about when you've been to the doctor or dentist, and they used very technical and unfamiliar language. It can be confusing and worrying, and you don't always want to ask what they mean.

When you're chatting about police work with your children, it's vital you use simple language, and that you do it when you're relaxed and fully focused. This will ensure you tell your story in a calm and informative way without adding too much emotion. Rather than saying, "We had a high-speed car chase through the city late last night", you might use softer language such as, "We stopped a robber running away yesterday because we had a much better car than him."



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4 Focus on the positives

Of course, there are positives and negatives to policing, like any other job. Regardless of age, you should think carefully about how any negative stories might impact your children.

To create a happier and healthier household, you may only want to share positive messages about how the role helps so many people in your community. Highlighting the benefits of the job can help diminish some of the downsides, such as missing family celebrations and days out. Children are more likely to accept these downsides when they know their parent is doing something meaningful to support others and keep them safe.

5 Can you get help from other sources?

For example, you may have friends/colleagues in policing that can share their experiences of talking to their kids with you. You may also want to join online parenting communities who are in a similar situation as you and may be experiencing the same challenges discussing police work with children.

You might also find our guide [Better Communication in Police Families](#) useful. Find it here: www.oscarkilo.org.uk/family-life/quick-guide-better-communication-police-families

