Keys to Effective Communication

- Maintain close proximity and use a low volume when communicating with students.
- Provide clear and simply stated directions of what you expect the child to do instead of telling them what you don’t want them to do.
- Repeat back to the student what you think they are saying to clarify what the student means.
- Some children may require a model, picture, or sign of the action paired with the verbal direction.
- Use age appropriate language when speaking with students. (Refrain from using “baby talk”). Encourage students to use age appropriate language.
- Allow students time to communicate independently using their mode(s) of communication.
- Allow for extra processing and response time.

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of saying:</th>
<th>Say/Model</th>
<th>Reinforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“No yelling!”</td>
<td>• “Use a calm voice.”&lt;br&gt;• “Use an inside voice.”</td>
<td>• “Speak in a low voice while saying... Now I can listen, you are using a quiet voice.”&lt;br&gt;• “Nice job using your inside voice.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Don’t run!”</td>
<td>• “We walk in the hallway.”&lt;br&gt;• “Use walking feet.”&lt;br&gt;• “Walk please.”</td>
<td>• “I like the way you’re walking.”&lt;br&gt;• “Thanks for walking!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Stop calling out!”</td>
<td>• “Raise your hand.”&lt;br&gt;• “When you raise your hand, the teacher will answer your question.”</td>
<td>• “Thank you for raising your hand.”&lt;br&gt;• “I like the way you raised your hand to share your ideas.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“When people talk, listen completely.”

Ernest Hemingway
Ways to Positively Reinforce Students

✓ Remarkable!
✓ I knew you could do it!
✓ What a great idea!
✓ You brighten my day!
✓ Outstanding answer!
✓ Thanks for volunteering.
✓ What a good listener!
✓ I like the way… (you are working quietly, sitting nicely in your seat, working with your partner, etc)
✓ How creative!
✓ Can you share your great idea with the class?
✓ ______(name of student)___ is the first one who is ready to work!
✓ Now you’ve got it!
✓ I can tell you worked hard on this.
✓ You must be so proud of your project!
✓ Hooray for you!
✓ Let’s cheer for ______(name of student)___!
✓ Super job!
✓ Does everyone see how nicely ______(name of student)___ is standing in line?
✓ You figured it out all by yourself!
✓ I like the way you are sitting nicely in your seat.
✓ That’s a good point!
✓ Excellent work!
✓ Congratulations!
✓ I'll bet your mom and dad would be proud to see the job you did on this.
✓ You did well on the test because you studied hard!
✓ Good thinking!
✓ Much better!
✓ Your classmates look up to you.
✓ I am so glad I get to work with you today.
✓ I appreciate your help.
✓ ______(name of student)___, you are the best!
✓ That is the coolest picture I have ever seen!
✓ You have put a lot of thought into the answer to the question!
✓ It is amazing how much you have learned this year!
✓ Way to go, ______(name of student)___!
✓ How does it feel to know all of your multiplication facts?
✓ I learned something new from you.
✓ Good thinking!

Strategies for Facilitating Student Independence

- Increasing learner independence is the instructional goal for every student! Encourage students to be independent rather than dependent.

- Encourage and allow students to make choices and decisions.

- Encourage students to complete activity as independently as possible prior to offering support.

- Allow student work to be authentic, rather than completed by the paraprofessional.

- Allow students to make mistakes and experience natural consequences, unless there is a safety issue.

- When appropriate, sit or stand at a distance from the student who requires additional adult support.

- Break larger tasks into smaller steps to allow student to independently perform parts of task/assignment.