



Helping Your Child to Learn to Listen

When your child learns to listen, life is easier for them and you. Children who are good listeners are more able to follow the rules because they have a better understanding of what you are asking of them. Children who are good listeners also have a better chance to be successful in school. Listening is important to their language development, reading, writing, and social interaction.

One of the best ways to teach your child about listening is by setting a good example and being an active listener yourself. Take time each day to listen to and talk with your child. It lets your child know you are interested in what they have to say.

To demonstrate active listening:

- **Give your full attention to your child.** Make eye contact and stop other things you are doing (put down phones or turn off the TV).
- **Get down on your child's level.**
- **Repeat back what they are saying and what they may be feeling** to make sure you understand.

To help your child be successful in following rules or instructions:

- **Do Away With saying “Don’t”.** Instead, tell them what you want them to “do”. Saying “don’t” requires kids to double-process. Kids have to answer two questions: 1) What does she NOT want me to do? and 2) What does she want me to do instead? You (and they) will be more successful if you tell them what to “do” instead!
- **Shorten your speech,** there will be less time to tune you out.
- **Keep instructions simple and clear.** Give them only the information they need to be successful. If you are always telling them “why” they need to do something, they may stop listening when you get to the “what” you want them to do.
- **Thanking them in advance for following instructions.** It gives them a chance to live up to your expectations.

Now let's have some fun! Check out the other side of this handout for some fun and games you can do with your child develop good listening skills.



Fun Listening Games and Activities

Play Simon Says

Here are the rules of Simon Says:

- One child is chosen to be Simon.
- Facing the rest of the children, Simon must give action commands and the children must follow them or not.
- If Simon gives a command beginning with the words “Simon Says,” as in “Simon Says clap your hands,” the children must follow the instruction.
- If Simon gives a command that doesn’t begin with the words “Simon Says,” as in “Clap your hands,” the children must stand still and not follow the command.
- Anyone who moves when the command does not include “Simon Says” is out and must sit down.
- The winner is the last child standing.

The winner is then Simon in the next round.

Red Light, Green Light

Set up a starting line and finish line about 15 yards apart. Stand at the finish line and have your child(ren) stand at the starting line.



When you shout “green light” the children must all run towards you, but when you shout “red light” they must stop and freeze.

Anyone who moves when you say “red light” must go back to the starting line and start again. The object of the game is to cross the finish line as quickly as possible.

Simple Nursery Rhymes

Most little kids know the basic nursery rhymes. I’m talking about ones like “Mary Had a Little Lamb” or “Baa Baa Black Sheep.”

To grab kids’ attention, try singing a nursery rhyme they’re familiar with and see if they can listen and complete the song.

Freeze Dance

Dancing, hopping, skipping, and twirling when the music plays and freezing when it stops. .



Listen to Stories on Tape, online or on YouTube

Listen to an Audio Story without looking at pictures. Have your child tell you about the story after you have finished.

Try the Hokey Pokey Song

Next, a great listening activity is having kids do the Hokey Pokey. (Put your right hand in...put your right hand out...) Change it up and see if they can follow the directions.

Teach your Child a Simple Song

Teach your child the words and melody to a new song and have them sing it back to you



Involve your child in activities which require listening and following directions.

Give your child directions that involve two steps. Here are some examples:

- Take off your shoes and put them in the closet.
- Pick up your plate and put it in the sink

Play Hot or Cold

Hide something fun for kids to find. If they walk closer to where the object is, you tell them the clue that they are “hot” or “warm,” and the farther they walk away from the item, you tell them “cold.” This forces them to listen to your clues to determine where the hidden item is.