

How to be a Better Listener

Actively listening helps you understand your child's perspective and where they are coming from. It does not have anything to do with a decision being made nor is it a way to get the other person to do something. Active listening is a way of gaining vital information about what is important to your child.



Respect them

Show that you are listening by making eye contact, nodding, being aware of facial expressions, and having an open body posture.

Be fully aware of the conversation. No multi-tasking. This allows your child to express themselves without fear or rejection.



Make eye contact



Don't rush them

Avoid being judgemental or critical by accepting and reflecting on what your teen is saying. Give any feelings a name.

Take the time to understand what they are saying. Try not to interrupt or rush your kids while they are talking.



Accept and reflect

Listen to understand

Are they frowning or smiling? Did they raise their voice? You can pick up on unspoken feelings in your children by observing their body language.

Good listening means to first seek to understand, empathize and to be in their shoes. Be curious and ask clarifying questions, such as *"How does that make you feel?"*



Observe body language



Validate their feelings

Note that to listen means to pay attention. It is not to order them. Listening does not mean ordering your child to do something

Take their perspective seriously. You can say this statement to validate your child's feelings: *"I can see how/ why that would make you feel uncomfortable."*



Listen does not mean obey

The Family Centre's [Parenting Communication Skills](#) and various [parenting classes](#) are available if you need further support.