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Poor Listening Skills Affect Learning

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Critical listening affects all areas of learning. Focusing on what is important to hear plays a large part in the success of learning at school. The majority of a student's day is spent listening to the teacher, to other students, or to audio media.

Parents can model good listening skills for children, and help them to become active listeners. As we converse with others, we can model appropriate listening skills and show children exactly how to listen. We must show children that an active listener looks his/her speaker in the eye and turns off the TV or radio in order to not be distracted while listening. If we are to teach good listening skills, we must be models of good listening.



- When your child speaks to you, be interested and attentive. Maintain eye contact. Ignore the phone or other distractions. Be interested as well as ask for his/her opinions regularly. Show that you are genuinely interested in what your child thinks and feels.



- Encourage your child to talk directly to you so you may model the habits of good listening. Children are more likely to talk and share when they feel important. Share your thoughts to extend the conversation. Strengthen your children's confidence by reassuring them that you hear their ideas.



- Listen patiently, as if you have plenty of time. With a limited vocabulary and experience in talking, children sometimes struggle through what they want to share with you. Don't let your eyes wander. Stay focused on your child.



- Do not cut children off before they have finished speaking. Listen respectfully, as this is a skill you wish for them to acquire. Avoid dead-end questions. Ask questions that extend conversation rather than cut it off.



- Watch for your child's nonverbal cues. Look at the expressions on his/her face, posture, energy level, or changes in behavior patterns. Find a quiet, uninterrupted time, and help your child express and explore his/her feelings.

Parents play the most important role in building communication skills in their children. Children spend more time with a parent than any other adult. Children are influenced by how they see parents interacting with others. Parents who listen and converse with patience, interest, and attention prove to be the best teachers of listening and give their children the greatest audience in the world.

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