

5 TIPS TO BECOMING A MORE EFFECTIVE LISTENER!



As teachers, we assume our job is to solve problems and to give advice. But often, children, parents or staff members simply need to tell you their problem; they need someone to care enough to listen. Deep listening is the ultimate expression of caring. Listening is more than hearing. Intellectually you are taking what you hear and searching for meaning in the words. Good listening requires understanding, the ability to see and feel what the speaker sees and feels. It is hard work that involves attentiveness and emotional sensitivity; but it is essential for reaching interpersonal connection.



1) Be Respectful and Pay Attention! Give the speaker your undivided attention, because as we all know, nobody feels heard if the listener is staring into space! Look at the speaker, make eye contact, actively listen to what they are saying instead of thinking of your reply.

2) Make it Visible: Small, subtle gestures such as nodding, smiling at the speaker and making small noises (uh-huh, etc.) let people know that you are listening.

3) Maintain Clarity: It can be tempting when we are listening to interpret what is being said through our lens, instead of realizing that the speaker might have a different point of view! Ask clarifying questions such as, "so, what you're saying is___" or summarize what the speaker has said so far.

4) Don't Pass Judgement: When we are listening to something (especially something we might not agree with) it is very tempting to jump in with a loud "but!" Instead, try waiting until the speaker is finished before responding.

5) Respond with Kindness: When the speaker is finished, be careful to not jump in with a harsh response or critically attack their own opinions. We are all different people and that is a great thing! You can state your opinion kindly in response while remembering how you would like to be treated.