



Help Your Child Learn To Listen!

Your child was born to listen! Listening and understanding language are the first steps in learning important language skills, like reading. If your child starts school with strong language skills, he or she will be able to understand more words, follow directions better, talk, and learn to read more easily. Try these suggestions to help your child learn to listen:

YOUR INFANT:

- Talk and sing to your baby during bath time, diapering and dressing. Talk about what you are doing: "This is water. Water is wet!"
- Play a game: "Show me your eyes...your nose..." etc. while you help your baby point to the body part. Say the names of clothing and bath toys: "This is your shirt." "Listen to the rattle."
- Imitate your infant's baby talk. Let your baby "hear back" the things he or she has said to you.

YOUR TODDLER:

- Give your child simple, one-step directions, such as "Go get the ball." Help your child, if she needs it. Clap and smile at your child when she is able to follow your directions.
- Play listening games such as "Simon Says." Keep it simple, such as, "Simon Says, touch your toes."
- Point out interesting sounds. For example on an exploring walk, ask your child questions that will encourage her to listen: "What do you hear? Is that a bird? What sound does it make? What kind of bird is it?"
- Read aloud every day to your child. Have fun! Make up voices for the characters, and act out parts of the story together. Be sure to ask your child questions about the story.

YOUR PRE-SCHOOLER:

- Play Simon Says, but make it a little more involved: "Simon says, put your hand on your heart, and hop up and down."
- When outside, help your child use his listening skills to stay safe. When riding bikes, tell your child to listen for cars and teach him to move to the side if he hears one approaching. Teach your child to stop, look, and listen at all crosswalks and stop signs.
- Teach your child songs. Play music CDs or the radio and let your child choose what he or she likes.

ParentTips is a monthly resource for parents with young children.
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