

# Talking Tips FOR PARENTS

For the August-September issue of **Talking Tips for Parents** the topic will be “**Listening.**” This month, **the listening we are talking about is not your child—it is yours! *Listening* is a perfect way to learn many things about your child.**

- Let’s talk about listening. ***There is no better compliment you can pay to a*** child, friend, spouse, or business associate than to listen carefully to what they are saying. After all, you would certainly want them to listen carefully to you. **Listening is not only courteous. It is the best way to learn about your child.**
- In order to listen in a way that will be beneficial, **you have to be present.** That means no phone calls, social media, no computers, TV, and so on. To be present, you must give your full attention to your child and *listen*.
- **I know it is impossible to give your full attention to your child all the time.** However, if your child is upset and has something important to tell you, that’s the time to put down your phone, iPad, computer, etc. and *listen*.
- **So you can accomplish tasks around your home and still listen to your children, you could have baskets of toys that they only get to play with while they are playing near you** in the kitchen, office, or living room while you are working.
- Another time it is important to give your full attention to your child is when you have the opportunity to observe him in play alone, or with another child. ***Listen to your child and take note of how he communicates.*** How does he let a child know he wants to play? How does he tell another child he wants something? How does he let a child know he doesn’t want the other child to take his toy? Does he play near, next to, or actually engage in a play scenario with another child? **What is he saying? Or not saying? *Listen.***
- The above bullet point will give you a lot of information about your child and his language skills. **This information you gathered while *listening* to your child will tell you where he might need you to model appropriate language for him while the two of you are playing.**
- **While reading books with your child, *listen* to his questions and comments.** If you hear incomplete or incorrect words, phrases, or sentences, say them completely so he can *listen* to how he might say them the next time.
- **If your child is an infant and not talking quite yet,** you can still *listen* to your baby and learn what he wants, needs, and sees. *Listen.* **Do you hear a difference in his sounds when excited, tired, sick, upset, bored, wet, or hungry? *Listen* throughout the day today.** Your child will change his sounds to match your reaction. **If something exciting happens, and you ignore it, so will he.** However, if you react with an excited voice and actions to match, he will learn to do the same.

