

## Listening Age 8 Summary

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### Why Listening?

Your child's success depends upon their ability to listen and understand what you and others are communicating. There are intentional ways to grow a healthy parent-child relationship while building essential listening skills in your child.

**Tip:** These steps are done best when you and your child are not tired or in a rush.

**Tip:** Intentional communication and healthy parenting relationships will support these steps.



#### Get Your Child Thinking by Getting Their Input

- *“Do you feel listened to? When and by whom?”*
- *“How do you know that the person truly listens to you?”*
- *“Are there times when someone is not listening to you?”*
- *“How does that make you feel?”*

**Tip:** During a family meal, explore the question: “What does it take to listen well?” Allow each family member to respond—model listening by allowing each person to complete their thoughts without interruption or judgment.



#### Teach New Skills

- Model listening while interacting with your child. Notice your body language. Ask: *“What is my body communicating, and how am I demonstrating that I’m listening?”*
- Listen for thought and feeling. In addition to listening to what your child says, see if you can identify the unspoken thought and feeling behind the content, in other words, the context.
- Build a sacred time into your routine when you are fully present to listen to what your child has to tell you.
- Learn listening strategies together by trying them out.

- Demonstrate poor listening and good listening. Act it out, then reflect and ask: *“What did you notice about her body language?”*
- Actively listen. One person listens to fully understand what the speaker is saying and waits until the speaker is finished talking before responding.
- Paraphrase. Echo back to the speaker a summary of what they've said to check how accurate your listening is and also to confirm that you have heard them (*“I heard you say that...”*).
- Seek clarification. If you are listening to learn something from the speaker, it is important to seek clarification on details to make certain you understand: *“What did you mean when you said you weren't happy this morning? What happened?”*
- Practice questioning and commenting with empathy. Instead of responding to a speaker with your own experiences, focus solely on the content of what has been communicated. Your child: *“Today, Mrs. Smith started a new project. We are going to be building fairy tree houses. I can't wait.”* You: *“Sounds like you are excited about this project. What else besides sticks do we need to collect?”*

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**PRACTICE**

### Practice to Grow Skills and Develop Habits

- Use “Show me...” statements like *“Show me how you can listen at dinner without interrupting.”*
- Recognize effort: *“I noticed how you listened fully to your sister when she was upset. That's so helpful to her.”*
- Play listening games.
- Read together.

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**SUPPORT**

### Support Your Child's Development and Success

- Ask key questions: *“It seems like you were having difficulty not interrupting when your friend talked to you. What were some of the struggles you encountered? What would have helped you to listen actively in that situation?”*
- Learn about your child's development. Each new age will present different challenges.
- Stay engaged. Ask yourself if you need to reteach or make changes.
- Engage in further practice. Play listening games to reinforce skills.
- Follow through on logical consequences to repair harm when needed.

**Trap:** When your child does not listen to you or focuses elsewhere, you might be tempted to scold or repeat yourself, but be sure and give them additional chances. Everyone loses their focus sometimes. Get down on their level, eye to eye, and review what you said again to help them refocus their attention. End with a smile or hug to reinforce your connection.

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## Recognize Efforts

- Notice even small successes: *“I notice you listened with focus to your sister’s story. I know that makes her feel cared about. That’s so important.”*
- Recognize small steps along the way.
- Build celebrations into your routine. Consider a hug when the routine is accomplished.

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