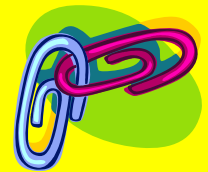




Home Links

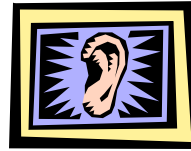
Kindergarten Newsletter

Listening & Talking: A Balancing Act



Speaking and listening skills are important in developing all aspects of a child's growth. Well-developed speaking and listening skills help your child form positive social skills and peer relationships, develop communication skills and gain an understanding of how the world works. Children become greater risk takers, learn better, and are more likely to express their thoughts and understanding in a caring environment where the adults around them listen attentively, show interest in and value what they say. Speaking and listening can be fun when developed through interactive play and talk. Some fun activities that promote active listening and speaking include:

- Playing games (i.e. board or guessing games)
- Telling riddles
- Talking at mealtime, bath time, play time, bed time and when dressing
- Talking when watching television or reading books.



Parents are good listeners when:

- They set aside time to listen and talk about the day.
- They use gentle words, an approving smile and a body posture that shows interest.
- They model and reinforce the rules of social conversation (i.e. doesn't interrupt, waits for a pause, says excuse me).
- They answer questions and add information to the child's responses.

Parents can improve their child's listening skills by:

- Helping to focus their child's attention by using facial expressions, pointing and gestures.
- Speaking slowly, clearly and emphasizing key words. Repeating if necessary.
- Limiting the number of directions given at once to two or three.
- Rephrasing or simplifying a question when the child does not understand (i.e. Why did the boy fall? What made the boy fall?)



Parents are good speakers when they:

- Speak slowly, clearly and use intonation and expression
- Explain unfamiliar words
- Model using polite words
- Limit the number of questions they ask
- Use a happy tone to convey love and acceptance
- Talk about and explain what they are doing (i.e. Let's make some orange juice. First let's cut the oranges. Next ...).

Parents can improve their child's speaking skills by:

- Making "talking" fun. Taking a walk in the neighbourhood and talking about the sounds, sights and smells.
- Setting a good example in social conversations (i.e. turn taking).
- Giving the child enough time to answer all questions. Sometimes it takes a child a long time to organize thoughts and feelings a put them into words.
- Scaffolding conversation so the child takes another turn by using little words to help organize ideas (i.e. First...Then... Next...Finally...)
- Encouraging the child to express feelings using words instead of actions. (i.e. I feel sad, happy, sick, tired...)

T.V. Talk Time

Watching television together can be a good time to develop listening and speaking skills. Parents can transform TV time into talk time by using these suggestions before, during and after watching an appropriate television program together.

Before...

- Give some background information about the program.
- Talk about what the program might be about.
- Talk about the characters and the setting.

During...

- Ask your child to talk about what is happening.
- Relate what is happening to any family experiences.
- Talk about the commercials and discuss the products.

After...

- Explain the actions and behaviours of the characters in the program.
- Distinguish between fantasy and reality (i.e. Could this really happen? Is there such thing?)
- Talk about feelings.

