

7 EASY WAYS

YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD WITH LISTENING

When talking to parents, "not listening" usually ends up being a blanket term that covers a myriad of issues. Because "not listening" is so broad, it can be difficult to find a solution. I'm not saying there aren't times when your child is just flat-out ignoring you—that happens! However, more often than not, it's less about "not listening" and more about some underlying issue.

Is she tired, hungry, or not feeling well? Or, is there some deeper control issue that is causing her to disconnect?

Article adapted from: *Positive Parenting Solutions*

GET ON THEIR LEVEL

When you need your child's attention, make sure you get *THEIR* attention—that means eye contact. **When you lower yourself down and look them in the eye, you not only verify that they sees and hear you, but you strengthen the communication as well.**

This means you might have to step away from the laundry or put down the whisk for a minute and step into the other room. Proximity is key—you're not talking down to them or barking orders from the other room—you're speaking with them.

SAY THANK YOU IN ADVANCE

Help your kids make an appropriate choice by taking this leap of faith. Your preemptive "Thank you for hanging up your towel after your shower," will encourage your kids toward good behavior much more than, "I better not see your towel on the floor again!" People, and yes, even children, will usually live up to our expectations if we manage them in a positive way. Letting them know, in advance, that you trust them to do the right thing will cultivate open communication lines and increase the likelihood the task will get completed.

Negative commands, such as "don't" and "no" require kids to double process. Kids have to answer two questions:

- 1) What does she NOT want me to do?
- 2) What does she want me to do instead?

That's confusing and contradictory. For example, if you say "Don't touch your brother," a child has to stop the current behavior AND determine the appropriate alternative behavior—*If I can't touch him, does that mean I can't hug him?*

Instead, tell your child what to DO.

Instead of "Don't touch your brother," try "Use gentle touches when touching your brother" or "Your brother doesn't want to be touched right now, so please keep your hands folded while we are in the car."

Instead of "Don't run in the hall," try "Please walk in the hall."

DO AWAY WITH "DON'T"

But when "no" is your constant go-to answer, it's no wonder kids stop listening to YOUR requests! Look for reasons to say yes more often. **Your "yes" answers will begin to surprise and delight your child and have them paying more attention when you ask for something!**

Instead of "No we can't go to the park," try "The park sounds awesome! Should we go Friday after school or Saturday morning?"

SAY YES TO YES

Oh boy, I was as guilty of this as anyone. Parents, and especially moms, tend to turn a five-second answer into a five-minute dissertation!

There's a saying in the sales industry, "**never sell with blah-blah what you can sell with blah.**" I think it makes sense in parenting too. When trying to get your kid's attention, be as concise as possible and they won't even have time to tune you out!

SHORTEN YOUR SPEECH

MAKE AN OBSERVATION

If you see a task that's been left undone, don't dive in with a big reprimand, just make an OBSERVATION: "I see a jacket on the floor," or you can ask, "What is your plan for taking care of the trash today?"

"What is your plan for?" is one of my favorite strategies to avoid power struggles. It's empowering because it's assumptive on your part that they have a plan—and gives your child an opportunity to save face and quickly come up with a plan in the moment if they didn't already have one!

This gives you the chance to put a positive parenting empowerment spin on the whole conversation! "That's awesome—I really appreciate your help, buddy."

A simple way to ensure your child has heard you and that she understands is to ask her to repeat back what you said.

To combat this misunderstanding, doctors have begun using the teach-back method which calls on patients to "teach back" to the doctor what treatment instructions they were just given. This method has been shown to drastically increase information retention from patients.

The same tool can be used effectively with children. Once you've made eye contact, shortened your speech, and clearly explained what you need your child to do, calmly ask your child to repeat back what they've just heard.

ENSURE COMPREHENSION