

LISTENING! “If the person you are talking to doesn’t appear to be listening, be patient. It may simply be that he has a small piece of fluff in his ear.” – Winnie the Pooh. Have you ever felt that your child was not listening to you and may have a “small piece of fluff in his ear”? As parents and teachers, we all have days when we feel that way. Learning to listen is an important skill that helps your child to develop good communication, reading, and social skills.

Here are some everyday tips to help facilitate good listening:

- Get down to your child’s level and give eye contact when you are having conversations or giving directions to your child.
- Turn away from or turn off all distractions. Sometimes just the background noise can make it difficult to listen.
- Be clear and direct when asking your child to do something.
- Tell your child how many things he will have to remember to do. “I am going to ask you to do 2 things - put your coat on the hook and go wash your hands.”
- Your child can repeat what you have asked him to do and you can repeat the key words (coat/hands). Sometimes young children need time to process what was asked of them.
- Show your child how to have conversations taking turns talking and listening.
- When reading a story, ask your child to look at the pictures and predict what is happening. Then he has to listen to see if he was correct. Also retelling the story in his own words or acting it out at the end requires your child to listen to the whole story.
- Cook with your child. Your child will need to listen in order to follow the recipe.
- Play a silly following directions game. Give your child a 2-3 step direction such as “touch your nose, turn around, and crawl under the table.” Your child needs to listen, remember and do each one in its correct order.
- Play “Let’s Be Quiet as a Mouse.” Sit quietly for a minute and listen to all the sounds in your house or outdoors - the refrigerator humming, the washer spinning, the clock ticking, the rain hitting the window – the list is endless.

## Happy Listening

Resources: Cathy Puettmiller (Preschool Teachers Passionate About Literacy), Lindsay Brown (Developing Effective Listening Skills in Children) and Livestrong.com (How to Improve Children’s Listening Skills)

