Listening to Children

What Does Listening to a Child Involve?

* Giving your full attention i.e. face her/him. Sit with her/him and have eye contact with her/him
* Understanding your child’s tone and body language
* Give them Full Attention
* Allowing your child to lead the way instead of giving your verdict.
* Being open to and respecting child’s views.

Why is Listening Important to Children? Listening to children enables them to

• put forward their thoughts and feelings.

• develop positive self concept

• enhance children’s competence and self confidence

• help children to accept other’s point of view

• help children to develop trust in adults.

• develop and sharpen their skills in negotiation and communication.

• establish healthy relationship with adults and peers.

Why is Listening Important to Adults? Listening to children

• helps adults to empathise with children

• helps them in understanding children’s unique thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears

and joy

• helps create child-focused culture.

How to encourage the habit of listening?

We can organise various activities in schools and introduce certain practices in

the family to encourage the habit of listening.

In the school, make it a practice to observe silence for a few minutes every day. Tell

children to listen to the sounds around.

Sometimes they may be asked to listen to their inner voice. At the end of the few

minutes of silence, let children share the sounds, which they heard from the

environment or their inner voice. The teacher should also share her/his experiences.

Listening and Responding to Children Positively

When adults listen to children, they also respond to what the child has to tell.

Instead of straight away telling a child that she is wrong, listen to what the child is saying

Child: I lost my red pencil

T A: Oh!

Child: It was on my desk when I went to the toilet.

TA: I see!

Child: Maybe I should have kept it inside my book before going to the toilet.

The Child is about to leave the class and forgets to take her lunch bag into the dining hall

TA: ‘Kai, Your lunch.’

Instead of lecturing and saying “You are again forgetting your lunch bag, do you remember anything?”

Saying it in one word prevents negative vibes and conveys the message positively.

It is important for the school staff to recognise that when they listen to children, they gain important insight into the reality of children’s lives.

• The continuous dialogue between adults and children results in mutual respect.