

Teaching Children Listening Skills

<http://www.docstoc.com/profile/kidandteens>

Author: Kay Kay

Teaching children basic listening skills and creating regular opportunities for them to practice them, with each other or with adults, could raise in them the awareness of the importance and benefits of good listening. The elements of Constructive Listening, especially those of Active Listening, could be taught to children at home within the family and with their friends.

Listening skills could be taught as social skills in the school curriculum or during after-school activities. They could also be taught in youth clubs; as part of development schemes for young people, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme; as badges to be gained in guiding, scouting and cadet programmes.

Listening Skills Exercise for Children

The simple, 'I heard you say...' process, which is based upon the repeating back element of Active Listening, is easy and can be fun to learn.

The 'I heard you say' process

- In pairs, children sit facing one another and close enough together to comfortably hear and be heard by each other.
- One child talks to the other for 2 minutes about something that interests them or tells a story from their life, past or present.
- The child who is listening keeps gentle eye contact with the child who is speaking.
- The listening child encourages the speaker by nodding their head and giving the occasional murmur of encouragement.
- The listener avoids interrupting the speaker unless there is something that they do not understand or need some clarification about.
- When the speaker has finished, the listener repeats back to them what they heard them say, beginning with 'I heard you say...'
- At no time does the listener make any judgmental or critical remarks, express their own opinion or offer advice.
- The speaker then corrects anything that was misheard or misunderstood or agrees that what was heard was what was said.
- The listener repeats back any corrected information.
- The process is complete when both the child who has spoken and the child who has listened are satisfied that the speaker has been accurately heard and fully understood by the listener.
- The pair then reverses roles.
- The other child now talks for 2 minutes and the child who is now listening goes through the 'I heard you say' process.
- At the end of this the pair feedback to each other what it was like to listen to the other and to be listened to by **them**.