

How to Be a High-Quality Listener

Listen with empathy, openness, and curiosity

Approach conversations with a genuine interest in understanding the child's experience.

How can we show this?

- Try to understand before you try to correct or solve
- Separate agreement from understanding
- Stay open, even when what they say is unexpected or uncomfortable

Listen beyond the words

Children don't always directly say what they are feeling.

How can we show this?

- Observe changes in tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, and mood.

Make your attention visible

Children need to see that you are present with them.

How can we show this?

- Make appropriate eye contact
- Nod or use responsive facial expressions
- Turn your body towards them
- Put your phone or other distractions away

Use supportive verbal responses

Verbal responses demonstrate whether we are truly engaged.

How can we show this?

- Open-ended questions: 'Can you tell me more about that?'
- Reflecting: 'That sounds really frustrating'
- Summarising: 'So today was tough because...'



Benefits of High-Quality Listening

Emotional and social

- Increased self-disclosure
- Greater emotional regulation
- Stronger sense of belonging
- Increase confidence
- Feelings of empowerment and freedom
- Greater autonomy

School Engagement

- More likely to participate in classroom discussions
- More motivated to learn
- More engaged academically
- Increased feelings of safety within the school environment

Relationships with children

- Characterised by safety, trust, and emotional comfort
- Greater connectedness
- Increased closeness
- Stronger and more resilient relational bonds

