

Active Listening

Primary Objectives

1a. Manages feelings

Why It's Important

Using active listening with your child lets him know that his feelings are being understood, even if he can't verbalize them yet. When your child displays a strong emotion, active listening teaches him language that will help him eventually verbalize his feelings. This strategy also supports his development of empathy, helps diffuse emotional situations, and lets your child know that you care.

Materials

None

What You Do

1. When your child shows strong emotions, get down to his eye level. Make eye contact and offer a gentle touch to let him know that you are listening.
2. If your child is not able to express himself verbally, you may have to talk about what you see and assess his feelings about the situation. *You are frowning at Michael's pile of blocks. Are you trying to tell him that you would like to have some of his blocks to play with?*
3. If your child talks, repeat his words in language he can understand while reflecting his tone. *You want that truck! You really want that truck!* (Say this as you scrunch up your nose and furrow your brow.)
4. Name and explain his feelings. *You are angry because Tommy has that truck.*
5. Help your child put his feelings and needs into words, if possible.