How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk

Tools for Success
~ The Bear Creek School ~

Based on the book by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish
1. Helping Children Deal with Their Feelings
2. Engaging a Child's Cooperation
3. Encouraging Autonomy
4. Praise
Helping Children Deal with their Feelings

Children need to have their feelings accepted and respected.
Instead of Half-Listening,
Listen with Full Attention

It can be discouraging to try to get through to someone who gives only lip service to listening. It’s much easier to tell your troubles to a parent who is really listening. He doesn’t even have to say anything. Often a sympathetic silence is all a child needs.
Instead of Questions and Advice,

Are you sure you didn't lose it?

I didn't. It was on my desk when I went to the bathroom!

well, what do you expect if you leave your things lying around?

You've had things taken before you know! This isn't the first time. I always tell you, "Keep your valuables in your desk." The trouble with you is, you never listen!

Oh, leave me alone!

Don't be fresh!
Acknowledge with a word – “Oh... Mmm... I see”

It’s hard for a child to think clearly or constructively when someone is questioning, blaming or advising her. There’s a lot of help to be had from a simple “Oh... umm..” or “I see.” Words like these, coupled with a caring attitude, are invitations to a child to explore her own thoughts and feelings, and possibly come up with her own solutions.
Instead of Denying the Feeling,
Give the Feeling a Name

Parents don't usually give this kind of response, because they fear that by giving a name to the feeling, they'll make it worse. Just the opposite is true. The child who hears the words for what he is experiencing is deeply comforted. Someone has acknowledged his inner experience.
Instead of Explanation and Logic,

I want my Toastie Crunchies!

We don't have any dear.

I want them!

I want them!

I just told you there aren't any in the house.

Have some Nifty Crispies.

No!

Now you're acting like a baby!
Give a Child his Wishes in Fantasy

- When children want something they can’t have, adults usually respond with logical explanations of why they can’t have it. Often the harder we explain, the harder they protest. Sometimes just having someone understand how much you want something makes reality easier to bear.
Helping Children Deal with their Feelings

• Listen quietly and attentively
• Acknowledge their feelings with a word
• Give the feeling a name
• Give the child his wishes in fantasy

ALL FEELINGS CAN BE ACCEPTED. CERTAIN ACTIONS MUST BE LIMITED.
Engaging Cooperation

What we do:

• Blame
• Name-call
• Threaten
• Lecture
• Compare
Describe

It's hard to do what needs to be done when people are telling you what's wrong with you. It's easier to concentrate on the problem when someone just describes it to you. When grownups describe the problem, it gives children a chance to tell themselves what to do.
Information is a lot easier to take than accusation. When children are given information, they can usually figure out for themselves what needs to be done.
Say It With A Word

Children dislike hearing lectures, sermons, and long explanations. For them, the shorter the reminder, the better.
Talk About Your Feelings

Children are entitled to hear their parents' honest feelings. By describing what we feel, we can be genuine without being hurtful.
Sometimes nothing we say is as effective as the written word.
Engaging a Child’s Cooperation

• Describe what you see or describe the problem
• Give information
• Say it with a word
• Describe what you feel
• Write a note (sing a song?!) 
• No emotional “hooks”
Encouraging Autonomy

• Toddlers and teenagers aren’t that different....
Let Children Make Choices

These are all choices that give a child valuable practice in making decisions. It must be very hard to be an adult who is forced to make decisions about career, lifestyle, mate without having had a good deal of experience in exercising your own judgment.
Show Respect for a Child’s Struggle

When a child’s struggle is respected, he gathers courage to see a job through by himself.
Don't Ask Too Many Questions

Too many questions can be experienced as an invasion of one's private life. Children will talk about what they want to talk about when they want to talk about it.
Don’t Rush to Answer Questions

When children ask questions, they deserve the chance to explore the answer for themselves first.
Encourage Children to Use Sources Outside the Home

We want our children to know that they’re not completely dependent upon us. The world outside the home – the pet shop, the dentist, the school, an older child – can all be called upon to help them with their problems.
Don't Take Away Hope

Instead of preparing children for disappointment, let them explore and experience.

By trying to protect children from disappointment, we protect them from hoping, striving, dreaming, and sometimes from achieving their dreams.
To Encourage Autonomy

• Let children make choices
• Show respect for a child’s struggle
• Don’t ask too many questions
• Don’t rush to answer questions
• Encourage children to use sources outside the home
• Don’t take away hope
Praise and Self-Esteem

1. Describe what you see.
2. Describe what you feel.
3. Sum up the child’s praiseworthy behavior with a word.
Descriptive Praise

Instead of evaluating, describe what you see or feel:

You cleaned your room. What a good girl you are.

I'm not so good. I stuffed some toys under the bed.

I see a lot of work has been going on here. All the blocks are back on the shelf. Every record is in its jacket, and every single marble has been picked up.

It's a pleasure to walk into this room. I really know how to clean up when I want to.

This scarf you made me is beautiful. Very, very nice.

Look at this rich red color and these thick fringes and all these rows and rows of even stitches!

And it's wide too. This scarf will really keep me warm on a cold day.

He likes it!
You noticed that the plants were dry and you watered them. That's what we call taking initiative.

You've been working to memorize that vocabulary list for over an hour. Now that's what I call perseverance!

You said you'd be home at 5 o'clock and it's exactly five. That's what I call punctuality.
How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk

Tools for Success
~ The Bear Creek School ~