

ACTIVE LISTENING/ ESCUCHA ACTIVA POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Active listening is an essential tool of communication and one of the single most important skills you can have in your parenting toolbox. Active listening means observing and listening to feelings and reflecting them back. It means to recognize your child's words, and more importantly to seek to really understand his underlying message.

For example, when a child says *"I hate you, Mommy!"* he isn't saying "I hate you," he is more likely saying something like, *"I am mad that you are spending more time with the new baby than with me."* *"Me enoja que pases más tiempo con el nuevo bebé que conmigo"*.

Active listening does not require that you agree with your child's feelings, but it allows your child to feel connected and understood while creating a caring relationship in which he sees you as being "in his corner."

To practice active listening:

- Give your full attention to your child
- Make eye contact and stop other things you are doing
- Get down on your child's level
- Repeat back what he is saying and what he may be feeling to make sure you understand.

It is very easy sometimes to ignore our children's problems, especially if we are having a bad day or if we are busy but our children need to know that we are going to listen to them, that we care. Active listening lets your child know you are interested in what he has to say and that he is worthy of your time and attention.

If we take the example above, active listening might sound like this:

"It sounds like you're feeling left out in all the fuss over your new baby sister. Is there more you can tell me?" *"Parece que te sientes excluido con todo el alboroto por tu nueva hermanita. Cuéntame más"*

This response makes no judgments and opens the door for your child to explore his feelings. Like most people, sometimes what children really need is for someone to listen and understand. Active listening will help your child learn about his own feelings and how to express them and will help you focus on what's really important.