

LISTENING

“Spike and the Silly Mixed-Up Sleepover”

Understanding Listening from Your Child’s Point of View:

In “Spike and the Silly Mixed-Up Sleepover,” Spike learns what happens when she does not listen carefully. She does not pay attention when her dad suggests what she should take to Lemon’s house for the sleepover. She realizes that if she had listened better to her dad, she would have had everything she needed for a pleasant stay.

Youngsters have difficulty in remembering long lists of abstract things, that is, things that they are not actually able to see and touch at that moment. They are not detached thinkers; they cannot think about thinking. Children use and understand language only in concrete terms. They do not understand metaphors, symbols, or abstract ideas. Parents can help by making positive comments to children. Give them messages of approval and care. When you have to say “no,” say it kindly but firmly. Also, enforce limits consistently. Let your “no” mean “no,” and your “yes” mean “yes.”

Here are some things to consider in teaching your child about listening.



3 & 4 year-olds will need help to experience big tasks in concrete ways. They are concrete thinkers and will need specific, one-step-at-a-time instructions. The directions “clean your room” or “pack for the trip” are too general and overwhelming to a very young child. To clean the child’s room, first give the youngster specific steps, such as (1) put toys on the shelf or (2) pick up soiled clothing and put it in the laundry hamper. It may help to have the adult assist the children as they learn what needs to be done. Parents can set examples for listening carefully by paying attention to children. Get down at your youngster’s level so they can look you in the eye as you talk with each other.



5 & 6 year-olds can begin to remember two or three steps at a time when given directions. They still are likely to need an adult to offer the instructions in the first place. Parents can encourage development of listening skills by playing listening and memory games with five- and six- year-olds. Always remember to praise youngsters’ efforts to listen carefully.



7 & 9 year-olds have a lengthening attention span and better memory skills. Youngsters are interested in completing the tasks, but their attention span may still be short. They may be easily distracted by something they would rather do. Parents can continue to model good listening skills by paying careful attention to their children during conversations. After the children have spoken, parents can re-state what they’ve heard so the children know their parents listened.

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Follow Up Activities for You and Your Child

During the video, you may want to occasionally stop it and ask your children: “What do you think you would do (or feel or say) in this story?” Then, watch how the program ends. After the program, you may want to try these activities:

- 1 Ask your children to share what they thought about the story. What character was their favorite? What character was most like them? In what ways?
- 2 Encourage your children’s development of listening and memory skills by playing memory games. With the family, take turns completing the phrase, “I’m going on a sleepover and I’m taking a _____.” As each family member takes their turn, they remember and repeat all the belongings mentioned by other family members. To make the game more difficult for older children, require that each person repeats the list with the same letter of the alphabet or in alphabetical order.
- 3 Younger children can listen to the video program for concrete things. For example, have your children try to remember all the things that Spike needs to take to the sleepover or all the things that Dexter needs for his paint job.
- 4 Have your older children interview other people about the responses they’ve had to prayers to God. Children can ask other people if they feel God has heard their prayers and why they believe so.
- 5 Have a family meeting where you talk about the importance of listening carefully and remembering what people say. Create a family story, such as “The Day You were Born” or “The First Day of School.”
- 6 Tell each other about one of the traditions of your family. Do any of these traditions pass along family stories?
- 7 Learn a few signs in American Sign Language. Example signs include “God,” “Loves,” and “You.”
- 8 Develop a habit of saying positive things to each family member. Perhaps you could select a “word for the day.” Here are some ways to give praise:

Wow	Way to Go	You’re a Joy	You’re Important
Super	Well Done	Super Star	You’re Precious to Me
Great	Fantastic	Nice Work	What a Good Listener
Good	I Like You	You’re Special	You are Fun to be With
Excellent	Awesome	Outstanding	You’re a Good Friend



Supplemental Materials for You and Your Child

Additional resources and can be found at: www.quigleysvillage.net