

PARENT RESOURCE GUIDE

DEEP LISTENING

What is Deep Listening?

- What can I do to help my child pay more attention to what other people are saying?
- How do I help my child become a better listener?
- How do I have deeper conversations with my child?

These listening exercises deepen children's ability to truly hear what someone is saying and to respond appropriately.

Benefits:

Deep listening is the first step to developing critical thinking and verbal comprehension skills. Practicing Deep Listening will help your children develop their listening muscles to gain the confidence and skills to engage in respectful and balanced conversations *without* adult guidance.

Steps to Building Deep Listening *and* Family Bonding:

1. Introduce the Concept!

In *52 Essential Conversations*, use prompts on **Attentiveness (Ace of Hearts)** to introduce the concept of Deep Listening:

- Give children an opportunity to reflect on what they already know and believe about strong listening.
- Follow up questions to ask:
 - *What does it mean to be a Deep Listener?*
 - *What do Deep Listeners do?*
 - *When you share your ideas with someone else, how would you like them to respond?*
 - *What might be some reasons of why people interrupt a conversation?*

2. Model It!

In *52 Essential Relationships*, use prompts on **Listen (Ace of Hearts)** to model Deep Listening. Use guidance below to introduce the following norms:

Norms	How to model for children...	Tell children...
1. Pay close attention	Nod and smile (if appropriate) to show you're following along.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the other person is talking, this is your cue to listen. • Your job is to try to understand the speaker, not to quiz or share your own story (yet!) • Be comfortable with being silent.

Norms	How to model for children...	Tell children...
2. Set judgement aside.	Remember to be patient. Allow awkward pauses and embrace the moments of silence. Show children how to behave if a person is taking a break from speaking. This is real listening!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open to new ideas and opinions. • Let go of judgment and remind yourself, "I am here to understand how the other person sees the world."
3. Summarize and share with emotion.	Being a Deep Listener doesn't mean you are a sponge – just soaking up what is being said! You are active and engaged to gain a clearer understanding about someone else or a new idea/perspective, revealed through phrases such as, "Wow. I had no idea you ____!"	<p>There are a lot of things you can do to get clarification and to show the listener you were paying attention. For example, you can say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I heard you say ____ is that right?" This gives the speaker the chance to hear what they said from the listener's point of view and clarify any confusion. (no sarcasm!) • You could also say something like, "I think it's really cool that ____." • "Could you tell me more about ____?"

3. Practice Time! Use the following cards to take turns flexing your deep listening skills:

52 Essential Conversations:

- **Self-Confidence (8 of Hearts)**
- **Purpose (Q of Hearts)**

52 Essential Relationships:

- **Care (4 of Hearts)**
- **Trust (6 of Hearts)**

4. Pick your own cards/conversations and have fun! Remember:

- Provide children with opportunities to engage in conversations with you and other family members about topics that are important to them.
- Positively reinforce Deep Listening skills (e.g., "You did a great job giving your sister space to share her thoughts!") throughout. Look for these signs:
 - Is your child paying more attention to what you're saying? Their siblings? Peers?
 - Is your child understanding the bigger picture and key points of what you're saying?
 - What is your child's body language when you're talking?
- Provide children with opportunities to reflect on their Deep Listening progress through drawing, writing, and/or speaking. Have them share their thoughts with you and other family members.

5. Additional tips for parents: Check out podcast interviews on <http://mindbrainparenting.org>