

Taken from Sharon's book:  
*Being a Great Mom, Raising Great Kids*

## 25 Ways to Really Listen to Your Children

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1. Be patient.
2. Don't complete their sentences.
3. Let them finish, even if it seems they are rambling.
4. Don't interrupt.
5. Face your child and make eye contact.
6. Lean forward if you are sitting to show you are interested.
7. Take advantage of passive moments, such as watching a video, listening to music, or sitting on the edge of their bed when tucking them in at night.
8. Take your children on errands.
9. Ask good questions, but avoid the word, "why?"
10. Ask their opinion about something that happened to you.
11. Don't jump to conclusions.
12. Don't change the subject.
13. Make verbal responses, such as, "I see," "really," "uh-huh," to show that you are paying attention.
14. Don't try to tell them not to feel a certain way. ("Don't worry about it." "Don't cry.")
15. If they make a negative comment such as "I can't stand Susan," rather than saying back, "don't say that," try saying, "Why do you feel that way?"
16. Turn off the TV.
17. Put down the mop, newspaper, or dish towel and face the child.
18. Encourage them to tell you more. "What else did he say?" "What did he do next?"
19. When they are sharing a struggle, rephrase and repeat what you heard. "What I hear you saying is that you feel I'm being unfair by not letting you go to the concert on a school night."
20. When he/she is telling you a story, don't point out grammar mistakes, but listen for the point of the story.
21. Let the phone ring if your child is in the middle of telling you a story about an event in his life.

22. Anytime your child starts to talk or ask a question, consider it an invitation to which you should definitely RSVP.
23. Don't glance at your watch while the child is talking.
24. God gave you two ears and one mouth for a good reason. Listen twice as much as you talk!
25. Remember, if you listen to your kids when they are young, they will be more likely to talk to you when they are teens.

How are you doing listening to your child? See if you can answer the following questions.

- Who is your child's favorite teacher?
- What is the most hurtful thing anyone has ever said to him/her?
- What does he\she fear most about going to middle school? High school? College?
- What are his\her friends like?
- Who is his\her best friend?
- Who does he\she admire most?
- What is his\her favorite music group?

If you are struggling with the answers, it's never too late to start learning. Become a student of your child and listen!