

Role Playing Scenarios to Teach Listening Skills

Ask your child to tell you a story or wait for a time when he starts telling you a story on his own. When he begins speaking, repeatedly interrupt him.

Have him continue to tell his story, but this time listen quietly. Ask him how both situations made him feel.

Reverse roles. Let him interrupt you as you talk, then have him practice listening quietly.

The next time he tells you a story, act distracted. Look around, sigh, bend down to tie your shoe, etc.

Have him continue to tell his story, but this time make your body language focused on him. Turn your body towards him. Make eye contact if possible. Ask him how both situations made him feel.

Reverse roles. Let him act distracted while you talk, then have him practice using listening body language.

The next time he tells you a story, ask him questions and make statements that are completely unrelated to what he's telling you.

Have him continue, but this time ask him related questions and make statements that let him know you've been paying close attention. Ask him how both situations made him feel.

Reverse roles. Let him ask unrelated questions, then have him practice thinking of questions and statements that are related to what you were saying.

Look for opportunities every day to encourage him when he uses good listening skills.

Everyday Play Scenarios to Teach Negotiation Skills

Opportunities abound in which to teach children the fine art of negotiation. Be on the lookout for any of the below scenarios and use them to help your child work through various negotiation techniques.

Pretend Play: If your child enjoys pretend play, join her every now and then to act out situations in which negotiation is necessary. This not only allows your child to practice in a way that is free from negative consequences since it's a made up scenario, but also lets her consider points of view that may not be her own.

Game Play: Board games and card games provide great opportunities to negotiate turn taking. If your child always wants to go first, help her understand that there are other alternatives that might make it more fair. Brainstorm with her, then let her choose which option to use.

Free Play: Often in friendships children have ample opportunity for free play together, but differing ideas of what they want to do with each other. One may want to play soccer, for instance, while the other wants to play with Legos.

When your child asks to play a certain game with you, tell her that you want to play something different. Brainstorm ways to compromise so that you both end up satisfied.