



## Are You Really Listening to Your Children?

Even though talking to our children is really important, because that is how they learn, we need to be particularly mindful that we are also listening from their point of view. This is so important, because not only does it help develop their language, cognitive and emotional intelligence skills, but it is a wonderful way for our children's self-esteem to grow because they are being heard. Listening deeply to your child is one essential way to have a close and connected relationship with them.

To ensure that you are truly listening to your children ask yourself these questions:

1. Do you spend more time talking to your children rather than listening?
2. Do you finish their sentences for them?
3. Do you interrupt?
4. Do you plan what you are going to say before your child has finished?
5. Do you give your children the answer or solution rather than let them work it out for themselves?
6. Do you ask your children closed or open ended questions?

(Closed questions are ones to which you can answer a simple yes or no. Open ended questions do what they say - they open up the conversation. E.g. Closed: Did you have a good day at school today? Open: What did you do at school today?)

7. Do you often ask your children how they are feeling?

If your answers to these questions have left you thinking that you need to listen to your children more, what a great step you are now able to take to ensure a loving closeness with your children and what an opportunity you will give them to boost their self-esteem. Their opinions and ideas will be heard and they will very much be a part of your family's decision making. If you would like to learn more about listening you may wish to come along to a one of our **Need2Connect** workshops about connection.

If your answers to these questions left you thinking that you do listen to your children well - congratulations - you are giving your children a great start as they are able to express their feelings and thoughts and contribute to family discussion.

The bottom line is that listening deeply to our children is so important and once we as parents are aware of that, we can listen with our lips shut and with our hearts (just like our book character Salurri says!), to give our kids every opportunity to express who they really are.