

The Five Fingers of Listening: Teaching Kids Listening Skills

I often hear parents say, “My kid just won’t listen to me.” Parents of little ones are frustrated, tired after a long day at work and the last thing they need is their child ignoring their requests. So, if you find yourself discouraged, I hope the following helps bring things into a new perspective.

Most of the information we gain is not through our eyes, but our ears. Listening is a skill we need to develop. Most parents were not taught this skill. So, this means it will take effort and energy, but you will soon see the fruits of your hard labor.

Teach your Child – The Five Fingers of Listening

I’m not sure where this originated, but I remember my first grade teacher using this all the time in the classroom. Basically, you put your right hand up and teach your child that these are the five things we need in order to fully listen. To make it fun, use jungle animal finger puppets. Then, name each finger with a different animal or you can use the child’s favorite animal or character – just be creative!

Your Script: “What are the five fingers of listening?” (Putting your right hand up). Then, name them...

1. Eye to Eye – (*Tiger Eyes*)

- The child’s head should be up... make eye contact with the child. If your child is looking away, lower yourself to the child’s level (on your knees) and gently raise their chin to meet your eyes.



2. Ears Open – (*Elephant Ears*)

- Point to your ears and pull them gently, taking your head along playfully. You can make a funny face as you pull on your ears to ease the child’s anxiety.



3. Mouth Closed – (*Bear Mouth*)

- Use your mouth – open it and dramatically close it, using your index finger to close the mouth as in shhh....



4. Hands Still – (*Monkey Hands*)

- Raise both hands at shoulder level and wiggle all ten fingers and then stop and freeze – it shows the child they have control over their body. Also, the point is to dramatize it to get their **Attention**. If you don’t make it fun, you lose your kid.



5. Feet Firm – (*Lion Feet*)

- Lower your voice and say, “quiet feet, stand firm,” and do the soldier’s pose.



The **KEY** to helping your child become an effective listener is **Consistency**! If possible, try to use props to make it fun. Once your child knows the Five Fingers, you may not need to use all fingers at once.

Rest in His Word: Proverbs 18:13

“Answering before listening is both stupid and rude.” (MSG)

Heart Checkup:

- In what ways have you been modeling listening skills to your child?
- Are you following the Five Fingers of Listening?
- Remember, you are the best role model for your child.

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For information on other topics, visit my blog: **Compassionate Healer** at: www.edithpont.com

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