Workplace Readiness Skill

Interpersonal Skills

Activity Sheet

Skill 6

Listening and Speaking

Have you ever gotten in trouble for not listening? Have you had trouble talking to others? Listening and speaking skills are critical parts of workplace communication in almost all jobs. The ability to understand what another person is saying and the ability to express your thoughts will help improve your job performance.

Description of Listening and Speaking

Listen and speaking means you attentively pay attention and ask questions to clarify meaning; you share ideas clearly in a manner appropriate for the setting and audience.

Examples of listening and speaking:

- You speak to your mother clearly and calmly to figure out a solution to the Wifi not working properly even though you are frustrated.
- A customer is complaining about a product your store sells and you quietly listen to their problem without interrupting.

Menu of Activities

These activities are designed to help families discuss and practice listening and speaking skills. Choose one or more activities to complete with your child.

Activity 1: **Improving Listening Skills**

1. To introduce the concept of active listening, watch the short video: How to Improve Your Listening Skills (youtu.be/D6-MleRr1e8).

2. Review the four steps outlined for improving listening skills.

    a) Focus on the speaker.

    b) Avoid interrupting.

    c) Avoid prejudging or making up your mind before listening.

    d) Show your interest.

3. Use this list of ways to improve active listening, and evaluate the listening skills in the following video. Discuss specific examples of what the person did correctly or how they could have improved their active listening. Sheldon is a Bad Listener (youtu.be/-O18rYBieww) - *stop at 1:16.*

Activity 2: **Practice Listening and Speaking**

1. To improve listening skills, teach the SLANT strategy. It may be helpful to write each step out.

    S – Sit up straight

    L – Lean forward and listen

    A – Answer

    N – Nod your head

    T – Track the speaker

2. Practice active listening using SLANT. Have your child listen as each family member talks about: the best part of their day; the worst part of their day; something they hope to do after the meal / conversation.

3. After each family member shares, have your student repeat the answers provided and ask one follow-up question.

4. Switch and have your child tell the family about their day.

5. You can adjust the skill level by decreasing or increasing the number of topics in each conversation. You can also increase or decrease the difficulty of the topics.

Activity 3: **First Step: Eye Contact**

Eye contact is a big part of letting people know you are listening. It also helps us to engage others when we are speaking. Eye contact is often a skill that needs to be developed. Using this activity will help build eye contact.

1. Sit facing your child and let them know you are going to practice eye contact.

2. Do the following activities for 5 seconds to practice eye contact (increase or decrease the time based on your child's current skill level):

    a) Make eye contact for 5 seconds with no distractions (no talking, no noise in the background).

    b) Make eye contact for 5 seconds while talking to your child.

    c) Make eye contact for 5 seconds while your child is talking to you.

    d) Make eye contact for 5 seconds with your child's favorite show on in the background.

3. Remember – it is okay if your child cannot maintain eye contact at first. Do this activity once a day until each step is mastered, then start increasing the time.

Reflection

Review the questions with your child and respond together after completing the activities.

- Did this information help your family better understand listening and speaking?
- What was easy or hard about learning and practicing this skill?
- Why is this skill important to use at home and at work?
- How do we continue to practice this skill in the home and in the community?
- What additional information or resources do I need to continue to practice this skill with my child?