



BONUS GUIDE

Strengthening Listener Skills at Home

A PARENT & CAREGIVER CHECKLIST



GETTING STARTED

What Are Listener Skills?

Listener skills are all the ways your child understands and responds to language. Before children talk well, they learn to listen well. These four building blocks grow every day at home.

**Respond to Their Name**

They look or turn when you say their name.

**Follow Simple Directions**

They act on short asks like "come here" or "sit down."

**Identify People & Things**

They point to or touch a named object, picture, or person.

**Understand Everyday Words**

They know common words for food, toys, and body parts.

LISTENING COMES FIRST, THEN TALKING FOLLOWS.



THE BASICS

5 Golden Rules

Keep these five simple habits in mind every time you ask your child to do something. They make listening easier and more rewarding.

1**Get Their Attention First**

Say their name and wait for a look before you ask anything.

**TIP**

Get close.

2**Give One Clear, Short Instruction**

Use a few simple words: "Give me the cup," not a long sentence.

3**Follow Through and Help Them Succeed**

Gently guide their hands if needed so the direction always finishes.

**SUPPORT**

Guide, don't nag.

4**Pair Success With Something They Love**

Smile, praise, tickle, or a favorite item right after they respond.

5**Start Easy, Then Add Difficulty**

Master one-word asks before moving to longer, harder directions.



THE PROGRESSION

The Listening Ladder

Listener skills grow step by step. Work on the current rung until it is easy, then gently climb to the next one. Every child moves at their own pace.

1**Responds to Their Name**

Looks toward you when you call their name.

**TRY**

Call, then reward the look.

2**One-Step Directions**

Follows simple asks like "give me" or "come here."

3**Identify Objects & Body Parts**

Touches a named item or points to "your nose."

**TRY**

"Where's your ear?"

4**Find by Feature or Function**

Chooses an item by clue: "Which one do you eat?"

5**Two-Step Directions**

Completes two actions: "Get your shoes and sit down."



EVERYDAY ROUTINES

Playtime

Play is the best time to practice listening because your child is happy and motivated. Try these during blocks, cars, dolls, or bubbles.

☐ **Call their name, then hand over a toy**

Reward the look so responding feels worth it.

☐ **Ask "Give me the ____"**

Name one toy and gently guide if they need help.

☐ **Say "Roll the ball" or "Push the car"**

Pair a fun action with a short direction.

☐ **Ask them to touch a named object**

"Where's the dog?" during a picture book or toys.

☐ **Play "find your body parts"**

"Touch your nose" between tickles and giggles.

☐ **Add a two-step turn: "Get the block, put it in"**

Only once single steps are easy for them.



EVERYDAY ROUTINES

Mealtime & Clean-Up

Food and tidying up are full of natural chances to listen. The reward is built right in, so keep directions short and clear.

☐ **Say their name before offering a bite**

Wait for a look, then serve the food.

☐ **Ask "Give me your cup"**

A simple one-step direction at the table.

☐ **Offer a choice: "Which one do you eat?"**

Hold up food and a toy to build understanding.

☐ **Say "Put it in the trash"**

Guide their hand so the direction succeeds.

☐ **Ask them to find a named spoon or plate**

"Where's your bowl?" during clean-up.

☐ **Try "Get the sponge and wipe"**

A playful two-step once ready.



EVERYDAY ROUTINES

Getting Dressed & Bath Time

These daily routines repeat every day, so they are perfect for steady practice. Name body parts and clothing as you go.

☐ **Say "Give me your arm" while dressing**

Pair the words with the action you help with.

☐ **Ask them to touch a named body part**

"Where's your foot?" as you put on socks.

☐ **Say "Get your shoes"**

A one-step direction with a clear finish.

☐ **In the bath, ask "Wash your tummy"**

Name parts as they scrub and splash.

☐ **Offer a choice of shirt: "Point to red"**

Build listening through simple picks.

☐ **Try "Get the towel and dry your hands"**

A two-step direction when they are ready.



EVERYDAY ROUTINES

Out & About

Errands and walks offer fresh things to name and find. Keep it light and short so listening stays fun outside the home.

☐ **Call their name before crossing or turning**

Wait for attention, then keep moving together.

☐ **Say "Hold my hand"**

A clear, useful one-step direction.

☐ **Ask "Where's the dog?" on a walk**

Find real objects in the world around you.

☐ **At the store, "Put it in the cart"**

Hand them a soft item to place.

☐ **Point to pictures: "Show me the apple"**

Use signs, boxes, and labels as you shop.

☐ **Try "Get your cup and give it to me"**

A two-step ask in the car or stroller.



MAKE IT WORK

Do & Don't

Small changes in how you ask make a big difference. Here is what helps your child listen, and what to gently avoid.

DO

- ✓ Get down to their eye level first.
- ✓ Wait a few quiet seconds for a response.
- ✓ Help them finish, then reward right away.
- ✓ Keep your words short and clear.

AVOID

- ✗ Repeating the instruction over and over.
- ✗ Using long sentences or many words.
- ✗ Doing the task for them too quickly.
- ✗ Asking from across the room.

**YOU'VE GOT THIS**

Every small response is real progress. Stay patient, celebrate wins, and keep practice short and joyful.

EVERYDAY HABITS

Daily Listener Practice Checklist

A little practice woven into normal moments adds up fast. Aim to check off a few of these every day.

☐ **Called their name and waited for a look**
A few times throughout the day.

☐ **Gave at least three short, clear directions**
"Give me," "come here," "sit down."

☐ **Asked them to find or touch a named item**
An object, picture, or body part.

☐ **Helped them succeed, then rewarded**
Praise, a smile, or a favorite thing.

☐ **Kept it short, warm, and fun**
Stopped while they were still enjoying it.

YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S BEST TEACHER.

