

Behaviour Strategies

HELP FILE

Won't Listen

We always say that children who don't listen generally aren't listened to. Listening is a skill and often children need to have the experience of being heard before they will hear others. Teachers have so much to give that they tend to talk too much! We need to listen more. And remember the little: saying 2 ears – 1 mouth.

Another aspect of listening which is given little attention is that occasionally a child cannot handle a lot of noise and will switch off. If your classroom tends to be noisy, then organise quiet times when people agree not to speak. Balance this with chat times when people can speak. If you have a very talkative class, arrange times during the day when they can talk – just for 5 minutes and then you'll find that there is a natural tendency to be quieter and they become aware of talking and noise and begin to be more responsible about noise.

The other skill we mention is Keep It Short & Simple or KISS. Try not saying anything, – write your instruction up on the board and point to it. When they have read it, repeat it and then let them follow. The more you repeat yourself they less students listen.

Talk about listening! How they remember things they hear, what helps them, – listen to their ideas on listening, – you may find what they say very helpful. I believe in this world there are many children who never get the opportunity to be truly heard and therefore are just modelling on those around them. As teachers we need to teach children how to listen and what to listen for.

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