

Visit With the Utays

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School Psychology and Education Specialists

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10 Ways to Help Your Child Listen Better

“Dear Drs. Utay: We realize it's normal for children to not always listen to us parents as quickly or as often as we want. However, surely there must be better ways than **yelling or coercion**, to get them to listen. Could it be ADHD causing them not to listen? Any suggestions?”

It is normal for children to test parents and not listen. Some could listen but won't and others simply do not **seem** to have the ability to listen. However, we believe **all children can develop the required attention, mental processing, and motivation to listen**. The following is a sampling of suggestions parents find useful to help improve their child's listening:

1. Verbally get your child's attention before delivering the message.
2. Turn off distractions before speaking.
3. Speak somewhat slower than usual and articulate clearly.
4. Vary your tone and volume to make your message more interesting to listen to.
5. Use gestures and facial expressions that fit the message to add visual, not just auditory, elements.
6. The more specific your instruction, the more likely is compliance.
7. Use short, clear, simple sentences, but don't be afraid to use high level vocabulary.
8. Separate and possibly number multiple parts of instructions into short bits or phrases, pausing between parts.
9. Your child may need some processing time for one part of your message before being able to really hear more information or a second request.
10. Rather than insisting your child repeats what you said (**the anxiety produced from the pressure of remembering your exact words will often interfere with the memory of the message**), ask, “So, what are you about to do?”

Often the above home-centered tips along with modeling and directly teaching, “This is what I mean when I say I want you to listen,” will result in improved listening and definitely less yelling and coercion! If this is clearly a major problem you need **extra** help with, then it is important to get to the **root** of the listening problem and so **professional child-friendly testing is a must**.

Testing may show a problem with one of the four major types of attention, or perhaps an issue with processing language, or maybe something entirely unexpected. The good news is, **once uncovered, there are research-based proven approaches to help with these challenges**.

So, whether by modifying your approach at home or making use of locally available professional experts, making sure your child has the strongest ability to listen as possible is one more way you help your child prepare today for success tomorrow.

For useful information about your child's **specific** strengths and needs as well as **practical recommendations**, call Total Learning Centers at (724) 940-1090. If easier, email us at success@TotalLearningCenter.com. Visit us at www.TotalLearningCenter.com and follow Dr. Carol Utay on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/carolutay>.

Total Learning Centers was voted AGAIN Best Tutoring and Best SAT Prep by Nickelodeon's Parent Picks.

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