

# **Please Listen to Me Santa Fe Centers**

## **Listen Attentively**

Get rid of distractions and pay attention to what the child is saying. At times adults may need to stop whatever they are doing and listen to the child. It is difficult to run the vacuum cleaner, cook dinner, or read the paper and, at the same time, pay close attention to what the child is saying. Do not pretend that you are listening when you aren't. If you are busy talking on the telephone or entertaining guests tell the child, "I'm busy now, but let's talk about that later." Then be sure to follow through.

## **Use "You-Messages" Reflecting Child's Ideas/Feelings**

"You-messages" describe the child's feelings and encourage him to express his troublesome feelings.

Examples:

"You are sad because your dog died."

"You are upset because you didn't win the game."

"You are mad because Jenny wouldn't let you play with her new doll baby."

When children are allowed to express bad feelings freely, they seem to disappear like magic. Hiding bad feelings is self-destructive; they can lead to self-hate, headaches, ulcers, and violent actions.

**Remember: Actions can be labeled good or bad, but not feelings. Feelings are neither good nor bad. They simply exist, and their existence must be recognized.**

## **Talk With (Not At) Children**

Talking "at" the child is one-sided conversation "Put on your raincoat," "You are going to spill that," "You need a haircut." Adults who talk "at" children often use the excuse that a small child cannot converse at the adult's level. But no one including the young child likes to be talked "at." You may talk "at" the family dog, or even a tiny baby, but try to talk "with" a young child.

Talking "with" a child is two-way conversation talking to him and then listening to what he has to say. Forming the habit of talking "with" children rather than "at" them will be especially helpful when they become teen-agers.

**Taken From:**

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