

Listening Carefully

Knack is on the couch and notices Specs under a rainy, black cloud looking very upset. Knack shows interest in hearing how Specs is doing. Specs slowly opens up and tells Knack about the problem. Knack shows concern and support by being attentive, and listening carefully. Specs seems to feel better after talking with Knack and coming up with ideas about how to handle things.

Narrated Message // *Our councils, talking and sharing circles, and meeting with our Elders are places where we come together to talk, discuss, tell stories and listen to one another. Listening is important in our culture. One of the most important things we can do is to listen to our children. We can change things for the better not by taking charge but by listening carefully and nurturing caring relationships with children who feel vulnerable.*

IDEAS

- There are many ways we can communicate clearly with our children, and let them know that we are there for them. Finding time in our busy lives to check in with our children and find out how they are is an important kind of support.
- It is important to give children time and space to move at their own pace, share their stories and help them come up with ways to deal with their problems. We can help children develop problem-solving skills, rather than rushing to do the thinking for them.
- We can take time to notice when our children seem worried or sad.
- Finding a quiet, private space to talk.
- We can listen carefully when children speak and tell us their problems.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Family Members

1. What are some of the messages in this film?
2. How would you know that your child is struggling with a problem?
3. Why is it important to listen to children talk about what has happened to them?
4. How would you describe “listening carefully”? How is this different from other kinds of listening? How would you describe it?
5. Is it difficult to listen this way? If so, in what way?
6. What kinds of questions encourage children to come up with ways to think about and handle a difficult situation? What questions help them learn and grow?

School Staff and Community Leaders

1. What might encourage Aboriginal students to share concerns they have? What are the barriers that might make it difficult?
2. How would you describe listening carefully? What are the challenges to putting it into practice as an educator?
3. What can we offer Aboriginal families in our school that would help them when talking with their children? What kinds of supports might staff need in order to support Aboriginal family members?
4. Are there any additional responses that might further support and meet the specific needs of Aboriginal children and family members?