

PRACTICING LISTENING

It can be difficult to slow down & create space for listening. It may be more challenging to create space to listen to children, families, & colleagues. Answer the questions in the chart below for each group of people with whom you work.

Question	Children	Families	Colleagues
What opportunities do you currently have to listen?			
What other opportunities can you create to listen?			
What do you currently say/do to create space for individuals to share their experiences and perspectives?			
What else can you say/do to create space for individuals to share their experiences and perspectives?			

Consider some situations in which you may be able to use the strategies below. Complete the table to create a plan for yourself.

Scenario	Sympathetic Response	Empathetic Response
Your colleague shares with you their frustration that people are not using their correct pronouns.	Example: “I know it’s frustrating, but at least you have me.”	Example: Consider how it would feel if someone called me by the wrong gender, name, etc. “Your frustration is valid. Is there anything else you want to tell me about it?”
A student in your classroom storms off from a group of children she was playing with and goes to the quiet corner. When you approach her, she tells you the other children keep touching her hair without permission.	Example: “I’m so sorry that happened. What do you want to play with to take your mind off it?”	Example: “It sounds like you were frustrated that they weren’t respecting your body.”
A mother of one of the children with whom you work tells you that her child was diagnosed with autism, and she begins to cry.		

Scenario	Sympathetic Response	Empathetic Response
----------	----------------------	---------------------

One of the boys in your classroom tells you that another child called him a girl for playing dress-up.

You arrive for a home visit and the dad who is not normally there invites you in. You mention how good it is to see him and he confides that he lost his job this week.