



## Becoming a Better Communicator

### 1

#### Active Listening Skills

To demonstrate genuine interest, care, and build stronger connections with others in my life, I will practice listening skills such as:

- Presence:
- Belief and Openness:
- Reflection:
- Empathy:

Practicing listening skills questions to ask myself:

- Which listening skills am I best at?
- Which skills might I need to practice more?
- What is an upcoming interaction in which I can practice active listening and what might that look like?

### 2

#### Six Ways to Communicate and Connect

1. Use “I” rather than “you” statements to communicate and affirm mutual understanding.
2. Identify your deeper needs and ask for specific help. We often assume others know how we are feeling or what we expect.
3. Avoid blaming (others or yourself).
4. State clear and specific observations of what was hurtful or disappointing. Avoid words like always and never, which are rarely accurate.
5. Ask for a break when needed. Avoid the silent treatment or withdrawing in order to avoid conflict or to express disapproval.
6. Notice the good and be specific about what you appreciate.

Some additional questions to think about:

- Looking at this list of six ways to communicate, which of these do I want to be more aware of when communicating with others?
- Are there any specific relationships in my life that might be strengthened by using these skills?



3

## My Listening Picture Book

*What my child/I liked best about this activity:*

*Ways this activity impacts my child's development and strengthens their relationship with me:*

*I used **The 4 Me's™** when:*

### How to Do This Activity:

1. You can complete this activity using any household or creative supplies you have on hand. As you follow the steps, remember to refer to **The 4 Me's** to practice the skill you're most interested in exploring with your child. For example, you might practice **Connect With Me** skills by having back-and-forth conversations and putting their feelings into words.
2. Create a picture/activity book about some or all of the different listening skills. For example, for presence, you could draw a picture of a present or a smiley face with big ears on a page AND talk about listening for sounds and being present. You might talk together about what you're both hearing or describe to your baby what you're hearing.

As you create the book with your child, you **MIGHT**:

- » Read the book out loud to your growing baby, describing the pictures and activities as you pay attention to their response or imagine how they might respond when they're born,
- » Enjoy back-and-forth conversations with your infant as you share about the colors and simple shapes on each page,
- » Follow your toddler's lead as they illustrate the book or scribble-color the pictures that you draw,
- » Support your child to count objects on each page or identify letters and letters sounds, or
- » Be silly and have fun with your child, act out the different listening skills as you read the book from start to finish.

