

A Short Parenting Tip

Teaching Children to Affirm in Conversation

Many children don't know how to listen without thinking about the next thing they want to say. Or if they do listen, they make statements like, "I know," or "I can do it better than that." Instead, teach children to affirm others in conversation. It's part of learning what it means to be a servant. Listening can be hard work. It requires that children think of the other person, not just of themselves.

Children can say, "I agree" or "You're right." Instead of launching into their own version of the story, teach them to encourage the other person first. "That must have been exciting," or "You saw a fun thing." Good responses in conversation are "Oh," "That's interesting," or to ask a question. Conversation can be self-serving or others-serving.

If your children continually talk and rarely listen, encourage them to affirm the last thing you said before they begin talking. Affirming others' speech is a skill that children will use forever and it helps them address a little of their own selfishness now. Furthermore, it makes conversations with children more pleasant and enjoyable.

This parenting tip is taken from the book, "Say Goodbye to Whining, Complaining, and Bad Attitudes, In You and Your Kids."