

## LISTENING MEANS PAYING ATTENTION.

- Children who do not get good attention tend to misbehave. They misbehave when their feelings cannot be expressed or are not accepted and have to be repressed. Then, desperate for a chance to offload their distress, they demand your attention with all kinds of disruptive or aggressive behaviour – or in some cases by becoming withdrawn and mistrustful of people.
- **Listening is a powerful way of giving children positive attention.** Children's body language including their tone of voice and the way they hold themselves offer clues to how they are feeling. Encouraging your child to talk is a great investment in your future relationship with them. **Noticing their feelings is important** – make a point of doing this e.g. 'are you feeling sad?' / 'are you feeling happy?' When **your child is noticed they feel important to you**, encouraged and valued. Something as simple as noticing how they are playing and positively commenting on what they are doing helps to build their self esteem. This is when misbehaviour tends to lessen.
- **Its important to bring feelings out into the open** so they can be talked out with your children instead of acted out.
- Parents want their children to feel better and they mean well when they say: 'don't cry, Shh, or don't upset yourself'. Crying does not upset the child. **Crying releases the upset feelings.** When we cry we release pain and hurt. Tears are healing and its important we give our children the time to cry and comfort them.

**PLANNING AND SKILL PRACTICE:** Sometimes parents react in negative ways to children instead of listening e.g.– shouting, 'switching off' , threatening or blaming. Think how you can make at least one child special by setting aside some time for 'listening' and 'noticing' this week. Watch how your child reacts to your new approach. Think about the last time you was listened to and how good it felt.