



# 4-H Briefs

Fun ideas to help members and families explore 4-H projects

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service 4-H Youth Development

## Active Listening

### FOCUS:

*Listening-* hearing and interpreting verbal (spoken) communications

### LEARNER OBJECTIVE:

To develop important listening skills and habits

### BACKGROUND:

Only half a conversation is talking; the other half is listening. Active listening, practicing positive listening habits, is the best form of listening you can use in conversations.

1. Giving your attention to the other person.
2. Encouraging the other person.
3. Getting the facts straight.
4. Expressing the speaker's feelings
5. Summarizing the conversation

### MATERIALS:

- Pencil
- Paper

### ACTIVITY:

One way people can improve their listening is to identify their own poor listening habits and make an effort to change them. During the next week, write down one conversation you have. Beside each conversation, note the parts of active listening you did well, and those you did not do well.

### DISCOVERY:

1. What kind of listening habits did you discover you have?
2. Did you find it difficult to actively listen when you found the conversation boring?
3. What did you discover you need to do to help improve your listening habits?
4. Which of the five parts of actively listening are the easiest to use? Which are the most difficult?

### PIECING IT TOGETHER:

The following phrases are examples of how we can encourage or discourage communication.

#### Encourages Communication:

- "Tell me more about that."
- "Are you saying that . . ."
- "Help me understand what you mean."

#### Discourages Communication:

- "That's a really stupid idea."
- "I don't believe a word you are saying."
- "You don't know what you are talking about."

1. Can you think of other phrases people use to either discourage or encourage communication?
2. What are some other ways besides words that can encourage or discourage communication?
3. How can poor listening habits affect your ability to communicate with others?

### TRY THIS:

Practice using active listening skills in the classroom, at a 4-H club meeting, and at home.

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