



QUOTE

*"You don't have to be perfect,
you have to be present."*

– Talethia O. Edwards

LISTENING WITH HEART

As home visitors, your words—and just as importantly, your listening—has the power to build deep trust with families. Every conversation is a chance to connect, encourage, and empower. That's why effective communication and active listening are essential tools in your work.

What is active listening? It's more than just hearing words. Active listening means being truly present, giving your full attention, showing empathy, and making families feel heard and understood. It's how we say, "You matter," without even saying a word. Active listening means going beyond everyday conversation, it requires focused attention on what the other person is saying and feeling. Let's look at an example of a parent who shared she was feeling overwhelmed. The home visitor used active listening skills to pause, make eye contact, and gently respond *"That sounds really hard. Can you tell me more?"* The parent visibly relaxed, feeling truly heard. When parents feel heard, they are more likely to engage with HIPPY. This consistency benefits their child's development and learning, and models active listening skills that parents can apply to their own relationships.

REFLECTION

Before/after your next home visit, ask yourself:

1. Am I listening more than I'm speaking?
2. Do families feel safe opening up to me?
3. Am I showing care through my words, tone, and presence?

Effective communication starts with listening from the heart. When families feel heard, they feel valued—and that's where trust begins.

WELCOME

Welcome to One Visit at a Time, the HIPPY US newsletter insert dedicated to YOU, our amazing home visitors! In each issue, we'll share tips, inspiration, and resources to support you in the important work you do every day, one visit at a time. Whether it's ideas for engaging families, building your skills, or simply taking a moment to reflect, we're here to celebrate and strengthen you in your role as a HIPPY home visitor.

~ Carla Mowell, National Training Director

TIPS

Here are some ways to use active listening to strengthen your communication with families:

- **Set distractions aside.** Use open body language that shows you're engaged. Examples include maintaining eye contact, smiling, using open hand gestures, and nodding.
- **Use simple encouragements.** Nods, smiles, and short responses like *"I see"* or *"Tell me more"* help keep the conversation flowing.
- **Reflect back.** Rephrase what the parent said to confirm understanding: *"It sounds like mornings have been especially stressful lately."*
- **Ask open-ended questions.** These invite deeper sharing. Try: *"What's been working well this week?"* or *"How did that feel for you?"* Questions with a yes or no answer are closed ended questions and they don't invite continued conversation.
- **Pause before responding.** Silence can feel uncomfortable, but it often gives families the space to express more.

Tough conversations may come up. If emotions are high, keep your voice calm and steady. Use *"I"* statements to express concerns: *"I noticed you seemed a little overwhelmed today."* Offer support, not judgment. Communication also includes being aware of your tone, facial expressions, and cultural differences. Every family expresses themselves differently. Approach each interaction with curiosity and respect.