



REDEFINING LISTENING: SUPPORTING ENGAGEMENT, REGULATION, & CONNECTION

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SUPPLEMENTARY HANDOUT

WHOLE BODY LISTENING

How Does Your Body
Help You Listen?



**My eyes help me
listen when...**



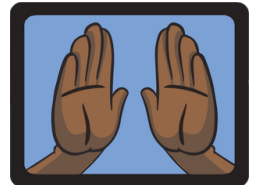
**My body helps me
listen when it can...**



**My feet help me
listen when they...**



**My brain can help
me listen by...**



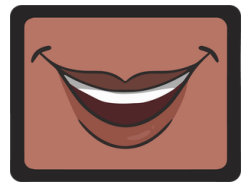
**My hands help me
listen when they...**



**My heart can help me
listen when...**



My ears listen when...

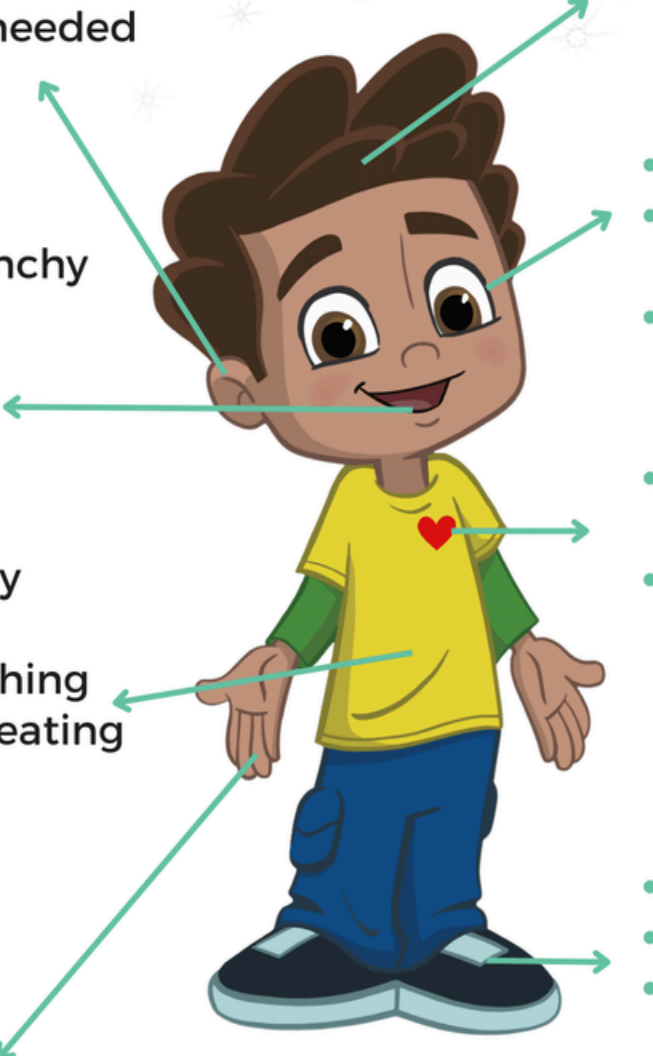


**When I am listening
my mouth is...**

Draw yourself and
what works for you:

**All brains and bodies listen and learn differently.
It is important to know what works for YOU!**

Tools and Accommodations to Support Whole Body Listening

- 
- Limit auditory distractions
 - Use an amplifier or noise-blocking headphones if needed
 - Chew gum, crunchy food
 - Drink water; try using a straw
 - Ask questions
 - Explore sensory strategies
 - Try deep breathing
 - Use adaptive seating options
 - Use a fidget or doodle or flap your hands
 - Squeeze hands together
 - Sit on hands or put in pocket
 - Think about speaker
 - Limit distractions
 - Look toward speaker
 - Look away from the speaker
 - Limit distractions and visual clutter
 - Think about what is being said
 - Consider the thoughts and perspectives of the speaker
 - Stand
 - Pace
 - Explore places to rest your feet or tap them on a surface
 - Cross or sit on your feet

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It is important to know what works for YOU



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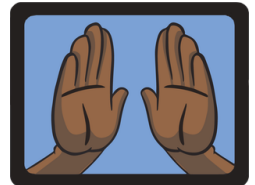
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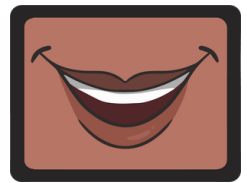
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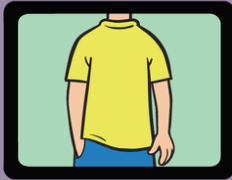
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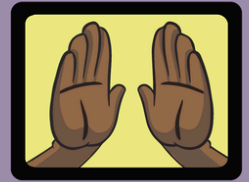
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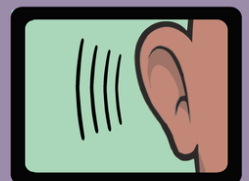
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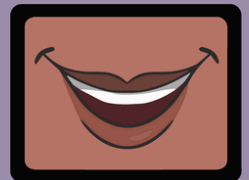
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My heart can help
me listen when...



My ears listen when...



When I am listening
my mouth is...





Self-Care Assessment

Fill out this self-care assessment using the 1-5 scale provided.

1 = Help! 2 = Not So Great 3 = Okay 4 = Pretty Good 5 = Wonderful!

Mind

Level of awareness of your daily thoughts (over or under thinking things). ____

Level at which your mind feels organized and calm. ____

Amount of time spent on activities that engage your mind. ____

Amount of time spent on activities that offer you fulfillment. ____

Controlling your ability to pause before reacting. ____

Body

Overall feeling you have towards yourself physically ____

Amount of exercise you get and/or spend outdoors ____

Quality of the food and drinks you consume ____

Amount and quality of sleep you get ____

Amount of rest/relaxation time in your day ____

Social-Emotional

Ability to manage your daily stress levels. ____

Extent of the positive feelings you have for yourself. ____

Managing your emotions. ____

Amount of patience you have. ____

Overall feeling you have in your relationships. ____

Overall satisfaction with your interpersonal interactions ____

Practical/ Professional

Overall satisfaction with the type of work you are doing (at home or outside of the home). ____

Satisfaction with the amount of hours you are currently working ____

Satisfaction with the level of challenge in your workload. ____

Sense of overwhelming feeling with your work. ____

Level of purpose in your work. ____



Self-Care Menu

Mind

- Write in a journal
- Practice mindfulness (see Mindfulness menu)
- Set aside some "me time"
- Read a book or listen to an audiobook
- Learn something new
- Pick up an old hobby
- Do a digital detox
- Write down positive affirmations
- Practice gratitude
- Spend time laughing and seek humor
- Repeat a self-care mantra every morning
- Be in nature

Body

- Get enough sleep
- Wake up early
- Drink plenty of water
- Soak up some sun
- Eat healthy foods
- Meal plan
- Get a massage
- Take a warm shower or bath
- Take an exercise class
- Go for a walk
- Get a pedometer and set a steps goal
- Do an exercise app at home
- Practice deep breathing

Social-Emotional

- Get coffee with a friend
- Date night
- Perform an act of kindness
- Join a club or take a class
- Spend time with family
- Hang out with someone new
- Volunteer to help with a community project
- Travel somewhere new
- Talk to a friend
- Compliment someone
- Send a friendly text to an old friend to reconnect
- Practice self-compassion meditation

Practical/ Professional

- Take lunch break
- Take mental breaks
- Declutter your workspace
- Set a "stop time" for work tasks
- Only check email during work hours
- Take time off when you need it
- Ask for help when you need it
- Clean out a drawer
- Update your calendar/planner
- Make a vision board
- Journal about your "bigger why" reason you do the work you do.
- Work on a passion project

When you make a mistake, fail, notice something you don't like about yourself, or are having a hard time...

TAKE A SELF-COMPASSION BREAK

NOTICE & NAME THE SUFFERING

I'm having a hard time.
I'm feeling _____.
Ouch.
I'm struggling.
This is a moment of suffering.
This is really hard right now.
This is stress.
This is challenging for me.
This hurts.
I'm allowing my uncomfortable emotions.

CONNECT TO COMMON HUMANITY

We all struggle sometimes.
Others would find this hard too.
This would be stressful for many.
Suffering is a part of life for all of us.
I'm not alone in how I feel.
This is part of being human.
Life can be hard for everyone.
Everyone makes mistakes.
No one is perfect.
Everyone experiences hard times.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Put your hands over your heart.

I'm doing the best that I can.
May I accept myself just as I am.
I'm human.
May I be kind to myself.
It's okay I made a mistake.
I give myself unconditional love.
I'm going to get through this.
May I forgive myself.
I'm here for myself.

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THE SUFFERING

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Constant
LOVE & LEARNING

Checking Our Perceptions—Sample

How often have we made an assumption about a child's behavior? These assumptions often occur around listening, so let's get curious and do some investigating.

Review the sample table below, then fill out the table on the next page.

Instead of this...	Get curious	Try this...
Child is looking out the window. She must not be listening.	Are the lights too glaring or too bright? Does direct eye contact interfere with processing information?	Ask the child what works best for them. Check for understanding and processing through nonverbal gestures, or even a "private code."
My son is ignoring me. He doesn't pay attention when I'm talking to him or follow directions when asked.	Did he have a hard day at school? Is the lawnmower outside distracting him? Is he hungry or dysregulated?	Offer something to block out the distracting noises. Take 5-10 mins to connect with him and follow his interests. Offer a snack or go on a walk while engaging.
They are wandering around the classroom and getting into things while I am talking.	Are they seeking some sensory input? Maybe they need to move their bodies in order to listen.	They are getting vestibular and proprioceptive input to help them regulate so they can listen better.

Checking Our Perceptions (continued)

After reviewing the previous page, fill out the table below with examples of your own.

Instead of this...	Let's get curious...	And try this....

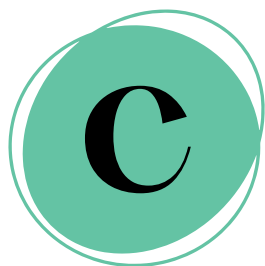
Behavior is Communication, Let's get curious! –Sample

Directions: Read the scenario below. Discover what the behaviors of the learners are communicating. Let's get curious, without judgement, to detect what is really going on.

Carla's classroom is really loud after lunchtime with her classmates talking and moving around. The teacher rings a loud bell to get everyone's attention to take their seat. Carla covers her ears, starts humming, turns her back to the teacher, and starts walking to the back of the room. The teacher tells Carla to come closer, pay attention, follow directions, and get in her seat.

We might jump to conclusions and assume that she doesn't want to join in or ignoring the teacher. Instead, let's get curious.

Curious



Do the noises
hurts Carla's
ears?

Attune



Check in with Carla. with a
low tone of voice. Reduce
sensory input

Regulate



Humming drowns out the
stressful noises and activates
her vagus nerve, which is
calming

Execute



Rehearse and
make a plan for
overstimulation

Behavior is Communication, Let's get curious! –Sample

Directions: Read the scenario below. Discover what the behaviors of the learners are communicating. Let's get curious, without judgement, to detect what is really going on.

Jorge just walked in the door from school. He slouches on the sofa and starts playing on his tablet. His parent walks in quickly and reminds him that he forgot to take the trash out this morning and that he needs to vacuum the floor. Jorge puts his earphone in, walks away, and doesn't reply.

We might jump to conclusions and assume that Jorge is being rude, lazy, and doesn't want to do his chores. Instead, let's get curious.

Curious

C

Is he tired? Does he not like the sound of the vacuum?

Attune

A

Take time to check in and ask what he might need..

Regulate

R

Allow a break after a hard day at school. Offer a snack or drink.

Execute

E

Have a photo of what the chore looks like. Use "Job Talk."

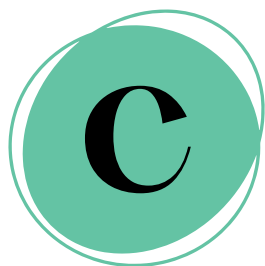
Behavior is Communication, Let's get curious! –Sample

Directions: Read the scenario below. Discover what the behaviors of the learners are communicating. Let's get curious, without judgement, to detect what is really going on.

Tony's teacher tells the students to sit "Criss Cross Applesauce" on the carpet. Most of the other students cross their legs. Tony moves to the edge of the carpet and starts rocking.

We might jump to conclusions and assume that he doesn't want to follow directions. Instead, let's get curious.

Curious



Tony doesn't like to cross his legs because it's uncomfortable.

Attune



Provide space and ask if he needs a break.

Regulate



Support rocking and movement

Execute



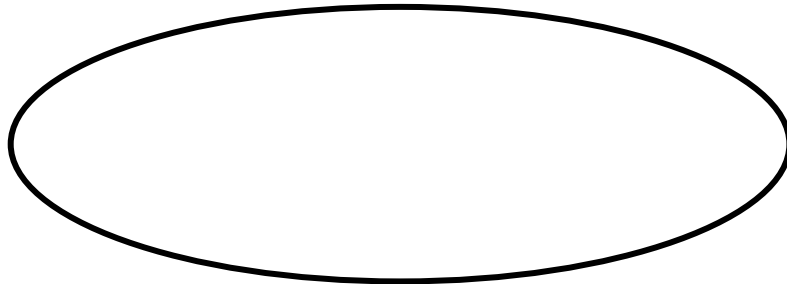
Space/zone established. Use "Job Talk"

Behavior is Communication, Let's get curious! –Sample

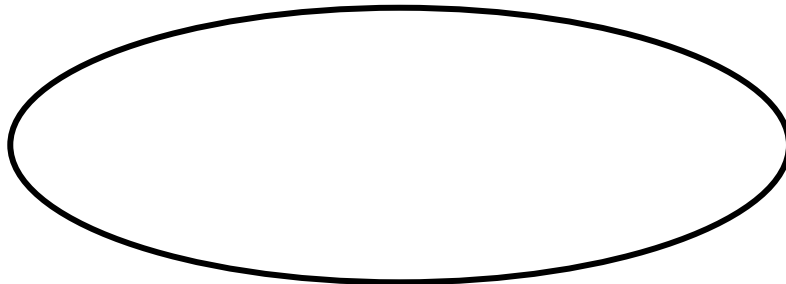
Directions: Describe the situation then get curious, without judgement, to detect what is really going on.

What happened:

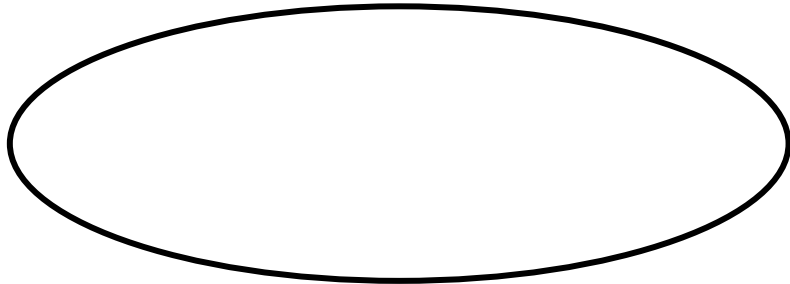
Curious



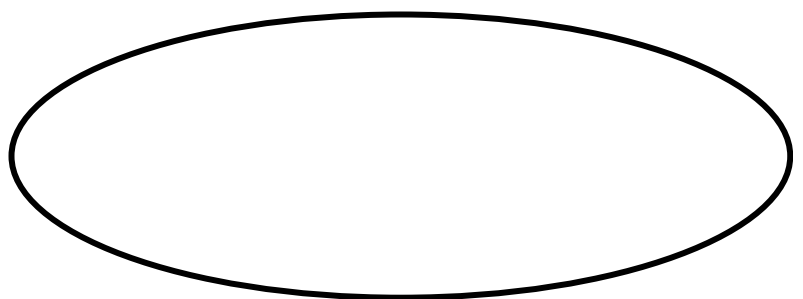
Attune



Regulate



Execute



Strength-Based Language—Sample

Let's challenge assumptions by rethinking our language, behaviors, and expectations.

Read and then fill out the following activity page.

Assumption: Stimming interferes with learning and should be interrupted.

Reboot: Stimming is a form of self-regulation and helps individuals learn.

Assumption: You need to be seated in order to listen and learn.

Reboot: People listen and learn in different ways. That's ok.

Assumption: You must make eye contact in order to listen and pay attention.

Reboot: Many individuals are dysregulated by eye contact and can't see and hear at the same time.

Assumption: "Attention-seeking" is the cause of many unwanted behaviors.

Reboot: There's nothing wrong with seeking attention.

Assumption: As an educator or parent, it's my job is to maintain control in my classroom and home..

Reboot: As an educator or parent, my job is to support an environment that is safe and conducive to growth and safety.

Assumption: If a student constantly tries to jump on the trampoline, it can be used as a reinforcer or a privilege they can earn.

Reboot: If a student constantly tries to jump on the trampoline, it's a sensory need, and they should be allowed to jump on the trampoline as needed. Sensory activities are not a privilege; they are a necessity and a right.

from *The Strength-Based Classroom*

Strength-Based Language Worksheet

We need to challenge assumptions by rethinking our own language, behaviors, and expectations.

After reviewing the previous page with your family, team, or staff, generate a list of assumptions.

Assumption:

Reboot:

Assumption:

Reboot:

Assumption:

Reboot:

Assumption:

Reboot:

Assumption:

Reboot:

Environments Support Learning!

For School/Classroom:

Interest Inventories: Use surveys or discussions to learn about students' interests and incorporate them into lessons.

Flexible Learning Environments: Offer various seating and learning stations that cater to different learning styles and preferences.

Student-Led Projects: Encourage students to undertake projects or presentations based on their interests or strengths.

Interactive Learning Materials: Utilize diverse educational resources that align with student interests to enhance engagement.

Celebration of Classroom Achievements: Create a similar display area to highlight student work, achievements, and strengths.

For Home:

Dedicated Interest Zones: Create spaces at home where children can explore and engage with their interests, like a reading nook or an art corner.

Showcase Personal Achievements: Display artwork, projects, or awards in common areas to celebrate children's talents.

Choice in Activities: Allow children to choose their after-school activities or weekend projects based on their interests.

Strength-Based Games: Integrate games and activities at home that play to the child's strengths and interests.

Interest-Driven Reading Material: Provide books and magazines tailored to the child's interests for personal reading time.

Definitions

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is a term coined by Judy Singer in the late-1990s that explains the unique ways people's brains work. All brains are different in how they function. Refers to a group.

Neurotypical

Nick Walker explains that Neurotypical (often abbreviated as NT), means having a style of neurocognitive functioning that falls within the dominant societal standards of "normal."

Neurodivergent

A person whose brain diverges from what is considered "typical." societal standards of "normal" or "typical" or neurotypical. Describes an individual.

Neurodiversity Movement

Nick Walker explains "the Neurodiversity Movement is a social justice movement that seeks civil rights, equality, respect, and full societal inclusion for the neurodivergent."

Neurodiversity- affirming

Accepting that all brains/people are unique and good for our community. It's not about "fixing" but instead about providing support that celebrates the strengths, interests and advocacy of individual needs.

Ableism

Refers to bias, prejudice, and discrimination against people with disabilities. It hinges on the idea that people with disabilities are less valuable than nondisabled people and perpetuates a negative view of disability.
<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/ableism>

Inclusion

Is seen as a universal human right. The aim of inclusion is to embrace all people, irrespective of race, gender, disability, medical or other need. It is about giving equal access and opportunities and getting rid of discrimination and intolerance (removal of barriers) and affects all aspects of school, work and public life.

Engaged Listening & Learning Looks Like



Seeks to understand and connect with the material or person



Does something or personalizes the information



Motivated by curiosity and meaning



Takes initiative and explores new ideas



Asks thoughtful, self-directed question



Collaborates with purpose and interest



Actively seeks support when needed



Questions and reflects critically



Focuses on making it meaningful



Neurodiversity is the view that neurological differences, such as autism and ADHD, are natural variations in human cognition. It promotes acceptance and inclusion of these differences as valuable aspects of human diversity.

Neurodivergent describes individuals whose brain function or cognitive patterns differ from societal norms, often including conditions like ADHD, autism, and dyslexia. This term embraces these differences as unique ways of thinking and experiencing the world.

AUTISM

Being autistic means your brain is built in a way that makes deep focus and noticing details come easily, and social interactions and adapting to change more challenging.

ADHD

ADHD means your brain is built in a way that makes creativity and focusing on the things you love come easily, though staying focused on boring things and managing time can be more challenging.

DYSLEXIA

Being dyslexic means your brain is built in a way that makes problem-solving and creative thinking come easily, while reading and spelling can be more challenging.

DYSCALCULIA

Dyscalculia means your brain is built in a way that makes words and letters come easily, but numbers and math procedures much more challenging.

ANXIETY

Anxiety means your brain is built in a way that pays attention to little details in your environment to make sure you are safe, though it can be hard to focus and let go of worries.

DYSGRAPHIA

Dysgraphia means your brain is built in a way that makes it easy to come up with ideas, but challenging to get them down on paper.

ND Affirming Goal Examples

SELF-ADVOCACY GOAL

The student will identify and communicate their sensory, communication, or learning preferences in 4 out of 5 opportunities (e.g., group work, transitions, instruction) using their preferred mode of communication (e.g., spoken language, AAC, written), with minimal prompting.

Why ND-affirming: Focuses on empowering choice and communication autonomy rather than demanding compliance.

PERSPECTIVE-TAKING GOAL

Given a structured peer or classroom discussion, the student will describe their own point of view and identify at least one different perspective, with support (e.g., visual aids, discussion scaffolds), in 3 out of 4 opportunities.

Why ND-affirming: Supports flexible thinking without requiring masking or forced “correct” responses—allows for neurodivergent ways of understanding themselves and others.

LISTENING & PROCESSING GOAL

When presented with multi-step verbal or written instructions, the student will identify the key message or request and indicate their understanding (e.g., paraphrasing, requesting clarification, restating), in 4 out of 5 observed tasks, using their preferred mode of expression.

Why ND-affirming: Prioritizes comprehension and communication strategies over passive compliance, and honors the student’s processing style.

Where to learn more...

Mona Delahooke, Ph.D

<https://monadelahooke.com>

Rachel Dorsey: Autistic SLP, LLC, ASHA-certified speech-language pathologist

<https://dorseyslp.com/>

Judy Endow, LCSW, Aspects of Autism Translated

<http://www.judyendow.com/>

Ross W. Greene, Ph.D.

<https://drrossgreene.com>

McAlister Huynh - The Neurodivergent Teacher

https://www.instagram.com/the_neurodivergent_teacher/

Kelly Mahler - Interoception Groupie and Occupational Therapist

<https://www.kelly-mahler.com/>

The Neurodiversity Podcast

<https://neurodiversitypodcast.com>

Laura Perkins

<https://theotbutterfly.com/>

Dr. Barry M. Prizant Ph.D, CCC-SLP

<https://barryprizant.com/about/>

<https://uniquelyhuman.com>

Julie Roberts, M.S., CCC-SLP, founding CEO of Therapist Neurodiversity Collective, Inc

<https://therapistndc.org/author/julie-robertstherapistndc-org/>

Two Sides of the Spectrum podcast

<https://www.learnplaythrive>

The Zones of Regulation

<https://zonesofregulation.com>

Books

Beyond Behavior

by Mono Delahooke, PhD

Divergent Mind

by Jenara Nerenberg

Neurotribes

by Steve Silberman

Raising Human Being

by Ross Greene, PhD

Unmasking Autism

by Devon Price, PhD

Uniquely Human: Updated and Expanded:
A Different Way of Seeing Autism

by Barry M. Prizant, PhD and Tom Fields-Meyer

We're Not Broken: Changing the Autism Conversation

by Eric Garcia

Organizations

- Autistic (autistic.com)
- Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (autisticselfadvocacy.org)
- Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network (awnnetwork.org)
- Autistikids (autistikids.com)
- CommunicationFIRST (communicationfirst.org)
- Foundation for Divergent Minds (divergentminds.org)
- Learn from Autistics (learnfromautistics.com)
- Neuroclastic (neuroclastic.com)
- Neurodiversity Foundation (ndfnd.org)
- Reframing Autism (reframingautism.org.au)
- Think Inclusive (thinkinclusive.us)
- Thinking Person's Guide to Autism (thinkingautismguide.com)
- Wrightslaw (wrightslaw.com)

“



**It doesn't matter where you are,
you can always move forward.
You can always do better and
be better.**



Judy Endow



**Do the best you can until you
know better. Then when you
know better, do better.**

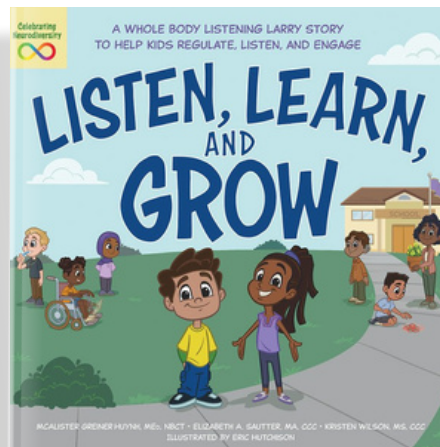


Maya Angelou

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Whole Body Listening Resources

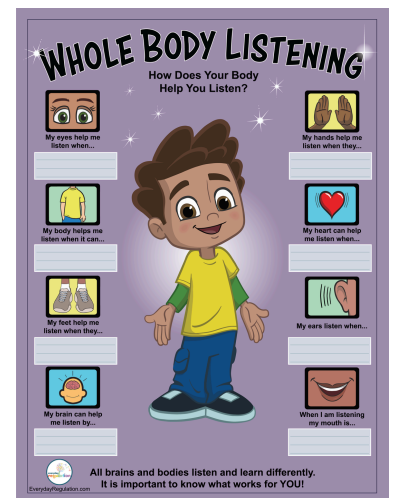
www.elizabethsautter.com



[Listen, Learn, and Grow: A Whole Body Listening Larry Story to Help Kids Regulate, Listen, and Engage](#)



Ways of Listening Strategies Poster



NEW Whole Body Listening Wall Poster



Whole Body Listening Bundle

Let's Stay Connected!

Inside The Connected Family Community

Practical tools, shared learning, and connection.



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