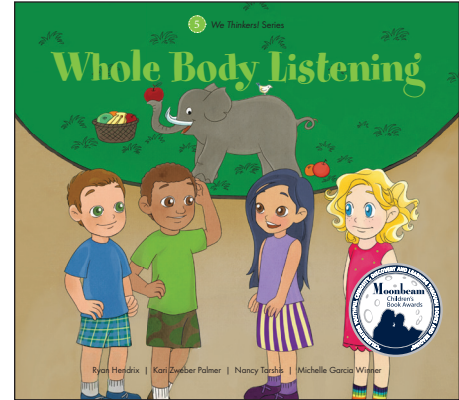


# Whole Body Listening



## Family Letter and At Home Activities

In our Social Thinking group today we learned about the concept of **whole body listening** (Truesdale, 1990).

Whole body listening is when your eyes, ears, mouth, hands, arms, legs, and feet are calm and quiet. When you listen with your whole body it helps you pay attention to what people are doing around you and it shows others you are thinking about them.

Exploring this concept helps increase our awareness of how we listen when we are part of a group as well as the nonverbal messages we are sending when others are talking with and to us. Listening with our whole bodies, and subsequently focusing on and thinking about the group, sets the stage for successful communication and interaction.

In this adventure, Evan, Ellie, Jesse and Molly take a trip to the zoo. They learn that when all of their body parts are calm and quiet, it shows others they are thinking about them. When they listen with their whole bodies, they get to visit and learn about lots of animals, and everyone feels good about being together.



In this example, Ellie and Molly are not listening with their whole bodies.



Everyone is doing whole body listening. Even the Cheetah is happy now!

## Activities to try at home

**Activity 1** Help your child get ready to listen with his/her whole body! Before you begin activities together, such as reading, use language to remind the child to turn on his/her listening body, one body part at a time (ears, eyes, arms, hands, belly, seat, legs, and feet). “It’s time to listen with our eyes; that means you turn your eyes toward me.” “It’s time to listen with your hands; that means they are quiet in your lap.”

**Activity 2** Point out times your child is doing whole body listening. “I can see you’re listening with your whole body. Your hands are listening, your feet are listening, your eyes are listening...” etc.

**Activity 3** Help your child notice when s/he is not using whole body listening. “Oops, your eyes aren’t listening! I can see you’re looking at your toy when I expect you to think about me with your eyes!” Offer suggestions of what to do to use whole body listening. “Show me you’re thinking about me and listening with your eyes. Now your eyes are looking at me, your hands are still and you are facing me. Now I know you’re using whole body listening.”

**Activity 4** Play a game or put together a puzzle that involves body parts. Mr. Potato Head is a great example. Place the body parts into a bag or hide them in a bucket filled with dry rice or beans. Have fun finding the parts and placing them into the body. Talk about how Mr. Potato Head can show he is using whole body listening. Make a point of how hard this is for Mr. Potato Head to do since his body keeps falling apart!