

Alpine County Choose Civility Campaign

(An initiative of the Child Abuse Prevention Council and County Superintendent of Schools)



September Focus:

Listen

"We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak."
~Epictetus

Listening at its best shows we value both the message and the messenger. That's why **listening is a civil thing to do**. Sometimes we focus more on our own needs than on what someone is saying. Sometimes interrupt, finish a person's sentence, or cut the speaker off when we have something to add. Sometimes other thoughts jump into our minds or distractions to take our attention away from the person who is talking. We may even look at our watches or the clock when someone is talking. Of course, we must **respect other people's time** by not dragging a conversation on and it's good advice to **pay attention** to notice if someone appears to be in a hurry or preoccupied.

Here are some tips to help us become more respectful and civil listeners:

- Fight the urge to interrupt or finish a person's sentence. I actually often hold my hand over my mouth in a meeting when I begin feeling like I have a point I want to make.
- Tell yourself, "This is the most interesting thing I've ever heard!"
- React with facial expressions, head nods and posture to indicate you're processing what you are being told.
- Wait until the person finishes speaking, then say, "Here's what I think you said." Summarize then ask, "Did I get that right?"
- Put aside any distracters like the newspaper, emails and tasks.
- Look directly at children, even kneeling to their level demonstrating real interest with facial expressions, gasps and nods.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Help children learn to enjoy the sounds of words by using rhyming, chanting, poetry, nursery rhymes, simple sentence patterns and by repeating favorite stories.