

## Listen

### Coach Talk:

In school it's very important to listen when the teacher talks so that you can learn. It's also very important to listen to your coach. In fact, listening is so important that we are born with 2 ears so that we can hear even better.

- Why is it important that you listen when your teacher, coach or parents are talking?

Another thing that is important is following directions. When you listen AND follow directions, you usually know what to do or where to go. This week, practice listening and following directions.

### Story:

Drew's parents told him that he should always look at the person talking and listen to what they had to say as a way to show respect. They encouraged him to sit up straight at school and to nod when the teacher was talking to let her know that he understood what she was saying. He was also told to ask questions right away if he was unsure about something that was said. He found this worked really well. When he listened he didn't have as many questions. He also found that it was easier to follow directions when he listened carefully which was helpful in soccer. Sometimes Coach would say things to the team during the game and Drew listened carefully so he would know what to do. Drew also noticed that a few of the other kids on the team didn't listen very well and they were the ones that usually had to ask questions because they didn't know what to do. Drew decided that listening was a skill that could help him a lot, so he was going to practice being a great listener and following directions.

- What were some of the things that Drew's parents told him to do at school to become a better listener?
- What were some of the advantages of listening better?

### Parents' Corner:

Listening well and following directions are skills just like dribbling and passing the soccer ball are skills. Listening well requires self-control and focus. In order to be a good listener a child must be able to block out distractions and focus only on the speaker. In his book, *How Children Succeed*, Paul Tough writes about some of the behavioral strategies students at KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) charter schools learn. At KIPP, children are taught to be great

listeners by using the acronym **SLANT** which stands for: Sit up, Listen, Ask questions, Nod and Track the speaker with your eyes. When children learn to listen well they are better equipped to learn and they are less likely to miss out on opportunities (2012).

Listening requires focused attention which is a learnable skill. In one national survey of kindergarten teachers, 46 percent of teachers said that at least half of their class had problems following directions (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta 2000).