Communication & Listening Strategies for Families and Educators



Strong partnerships depend on more than sharing information- they require listening, understanding, and making space for different perspectives. Effective communication is two-way; listen to understand what others bring, ask questions, and work toward common ground.

Strategy	What It Means	Try Saying
Seeking Information	A request to provide important information	"Can you tell me more about...?" "Can you give me an example of...?"
Clarifying Information	Ensuring that everyone has the same understanding through restatement	"I think I heard you say {...}, is that correct?" "I'm not sure I understand"
Sharing/Providing Information	An exchange between parties	"From my experience, let me share with you what I see at home.."
Negotiating Through Consenus Building	A brief statement of what has been said thus far	"Does this reflect what we've agreed to?" or "Is everyone comfortable moving forward?"
Soliciting Participation	Questioning the group to see if all parties are in agreement	"It seems we still have some unresolved issues. Can we take a break and come back to this later?"
Summarizing	When the discussion is at an impasse, take a break & come back refreshed	"I'd like to make sure everyone has a chance to share. What are your thoughts?"
Checking for Agreement	Everyone is actively involved in the discussion	"Let me recap what we've discussed so far..." or "Here are the next steps we've agreed on..."
Taking a Break	An effort to find common ground	"Can we agree to try {...} for a short time and see how this works?"







Better Conversations Build Stronger Partnerships



Listen to Understand- Good listening builds trust and helps everyone feel heard	
Be Present	Give the speaker your attention and allow them to finish their thought
Stay Curious	Ask questions to better understand instead of making assumptions
Listen for what matters	Pay attention to the concerns, hopes, priorities, and experiences behind the words
Reflect Back	Check your understanding: “What I’m hearing is... did I get that right?”
Make space for different perspectives	Understanding someone’s perspective does not require agreeing with it

Try this Instead:
Small shifts in language can make a difference

Instead of...	Try...
“That’s not what I said.”	“I may not have explained that clearly. Can I try again?”
“You don’t understand.”	“Can I share a little more about why this is important to me?”
“We’ve already tried that.”	“We’ve tried something similar before. Can we talk about what might be different this time?”
“This won’t work.”	“What would need to happen to make this work?”

Before you leave, take a moment to reflect:

- Did everyone have an opportunity to contribute?
- Do we understand one another’s perspectives?
- Are we clear about what we agreed to?
- Do we know what happens next?

you got this

Contact: Stefanie Babits, Project Coordinator- START, NJ FE Hub | sbabits@spanadvocacy.org