

Tuning in to your child (0-6 years)

What is tuning in?

Tuning in is when you give your child your full attention. All children start communicating with us from the day they are born. But they all use different facial expressions, sounds, words, actions and gestures to communicate. When you tune in, you are able to notice and read your child's cues so you are more likely to be able to respond to her appropriately.

Why is it important to tune in to your child?

The level of attention you give your child, and the way you read her signals, is crucial for her development. When you are able to read your child's cues accurately, you are more likely to respond in a way that helps her learn and develop.

Tips for tuning in to your child

Here are some ways you can tune in to your child of **any age**:

- Stop and pay attention to your child's attempts to communicate.
- Give your child your full attention by turning away from the other things around you – for example, turn away from the television or put down your phone.
- Tune in to your child's feelings, or what she is saying.
- Respond to her.

When tuning in to **young children** (0-2 years):

- Encourage your child to communicate more by smiling and praising her for communicating to you.
- Try and respond to your child's cues quickly so she learns how to get your attention appropriately.
- Respond to your child's cue by saying something to her. For example, if she points to her cup, you could ask, 'Are you thirsty? Would you like a drink?'

When tuning in to **older children** (2-6 years):

- Listen to your child and try to tune in to what she is really saying. For example, if she is not looking at you or saying much about what happened today, she might really be saying something went wrong.
- You do not always have to respond to your child with words, you can give her a hug or let her help with the cooking, without needing to talk.
- When your older child is talking to you, stop speaking and focus on listening carefully. Do not jump in with a solution too quickly.



Recommended Reads by the National Library Board

Recommended Reads

- [Tantrums: Understanding and coping with your child's emotions](#)
- [Help your child develop emotional literacy: The parents' guide to happy children](#)
- [Thirty Million Words](#)