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## Communicating with Children

### Soft-skills in communicating with children: Active Listening

Active listening is a doctor's basic ability, it offers the support for a better communication with the patient.

It is the one that encourages the patient to talk open and free. Through active listening the doctor transmits respect for the patient's thoughts or feelings and lets him know that the sent message is understood.

The factors that support the process of active listening:

- Non-verbal communication (voice tone and intensity, mimic, gestures) must be adequate for the contents and the patient's emotional status;
- Visual contact with the patient without staring at him;
- You can use words such as: 'hmm...'; 'yes...'; 'I understand...';
- Don not talk continuously, let the patient talk and ask questions;
- Listening must not be focused only on the verbal message – we obtain multiple information through non-verbal messages that the patient sends: vegetative reactions (pallor/blushing), tone, gestures, etc.;
- Listening must be authentic – the doctor must be sincerely interested by the problem/approached subject;
- Listening must not be educative, do not make value judgements in terms of 'good'/'bad', 'interesting'/'uninteresting', etc.;

**Skills** that must be avoided in the process of active listening:

- Not paying attention, not following the patient's story;
- 'superficial', shallow listening;
- Listening without understanding and asking supplementary information;
- Interrupting the patient in the middle of the phrase;
- Repeating in mind the next question.



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