



**CLIPPINGS** a weekly column from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

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Week of September 2, 2019  
**For Immediate Release**

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### **Can I Have Your Attention, Please?**

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We've been looking at different ways to reflect on our parenting over the last few Science of Parenting ([www.scienceofparenting.org](http://www.scienceofparenting.org)) blog posts, which can be found under the "Trends" tab on the website, and today it continues with the final of our four words – ATTENTIVE parenting. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development defines Attentive Parenting as "paying attention to your child's life and observing what goes on."

Observing children is one of my very favorite things to do. I love watching young children's smiling eyebrows and wiggly fingers or toes. It seems as if every word, thought, and idea is communicated through those pieces and parts of their small bodies. Teenagers also communicate with us through their rolling eyes, sagging shoulders, and tapping feet.

Paying attention – *OOF!* It is so hard sometimes, yet so very important. Admittedly, observing our own children can be difficult. However, if we really take a moment to quietly sit back, watch, and listen, we may be amazed at what our children are truly sharing with us. We may learn that they are too hot or too cold and it's making them squirm and fidget. We may find out that the sounds around them are overwhelming and they are becoming whiny or frustrated. We may discover that they are hungry or thirsty and their aggressive behavior is overshadowing their words.

By taking a moment and making it a priority to PAY ATTENTION to the small signs and signals our children are sharing (the eyes, the fingers, the shoulders), we could potentially begin to avoid some of those meltdowns. In the moment, it may seem as if there was 'no sign or signal,' but if we had a video camera to go back and show us what we missed, we'd begin to think otherwise.

I'm not suggesting this is easy or will be the one and only magic answer - BUT - it may be another tool to add to your parenting toolbox. Continue to fill it with more tips, tricks and techniques as you continue on your parenting journey.

I encourage you to find a time to just quietly observe the wonder that is your child. You may just find another cool parenting word... Effective, Consistent, Active, Attentive... maybe even, AMAZED!

Next week we will conclude this series and reflect on how words, indeed, have power! Follow along at [www.scienceofparenting.org](http://www.scienceofparenting.org).

Source: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development,  
[https://www.nichd.nih.gov/sites/default/files/publications/pubs/documents/adventures\\_in\\_parenting\\_rev.pdf](https://www.nichd.nih.gov/sites/default/files/publications/pubs/documents/adventures_in_parenting_rev.pdf)

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