



How to Start your Hand in Hand Book Club with

Listen: Five Simple Tools to Meet Your Everyday Parenting Challenges

Everyday, we hear from parents craving support from other thoughtful, non-judgmental parents. Hand in Hand's *Listen* Book Club is a great way to get parents together to support and learn from each other and build a parenting community right in your own neighborhood.

Listen gives parents Five Tools that are a roadmap to gentle, connected parenting. Share how you use the tools, talk about your experiences and outcomes, brainstorm ways to take the tools and make them your own. Ultimately, take a deep breath and get a bit of relief from the hard emotional work of parenting during your *Listen* Book Club and return to your family strengthened, calm, and ready to lead them to laughter and greater connection.

To help get your *Listen* Book Club started, we've pulled together these ideas and guidelines that we hope you'll find helpful.

What a *Listen* Book Club should do:

- Share mutual appreciation for the tremendous job each parent does.
- Provide a supportive space to share challenges, concerns, and ideas on how to make parenting more rewarding, effective, and joyful.
- Learn new approaches and insights – from the experts and the experts in field: Other parents.
- Develop skills to strengthen families in your neighborhood, and deepen your sense of community.
- Laugh, cry, and comfort other parents. Make and keep lasting friendships.





How To Get Started

- Identify a group of parents to invite and decide on how formal the group will be.
 - **Aim:** Will it be more social or serious study?
 - **Location:** Will you meet at one person's house or rotate hosting? Is there another place to meet? Think about a conference room, library study room, or other public spaces.
 - **Timing:** Will your group meet in the evenings when children are asleep and when you rely on partners and sitters? Could you meet when the children are at school? How will the group deal with childcare challenges? Will the group meet weekly, bi-monthly or monthly? How will you communicate between meetings? (group text, email, or social media?)
 - **Length:** What other commitments do members of the group have? How long will meetings be?
 - **Sustenance:** Gatherings become more social and less focused with food. Do you want wine and cheese, tea and snacks, or full on potluck?

Book Club Meetings

Make sure everyone has a copy of *LISTEN: Five Simple Tools to Meet Your Everyday Parenting Challenges* by Patty Wipfler and Tosha Schore M.A. (Available [on our website](#) and wherever books are sold.)

We recommend planning at least 5 club meetings in advance so that your group can focus each meeting around one tool. And it often takes a few meetings to create a supportive environment together.

We'd like to invite hosts to open the Book Club in the tradition that Hand in Hand opens its own meetings and gatherings. Acknowledge each parent for the great, important work they do and invite everyone to share One Good Thing.





Here's one example of how a meeting might go:

- o One Good Thing—**5 minutes** start the meeting by asking each Parent to say one thing that is going well in their life since the last gathering.
- o Discuss a chapter or specific tool (Staylistening, Special Time, etc.) from *Listen*—**30 minutes**. Let everyone speak who wants to.
 - What was interesting? What did you not understand? How does it relate to your life and experience? What did you learn? What concerns arise? How can it work in your family?
- o Discuss a story or stories from Part III of *Listen*—**30 minutes**. Consider focusing on ages of children or common challenges parents in the group are facing
 - How did the tools work in this example? How does this relate to similar experiences in your parenting? Where are the challenges and victories in this example? How can this help your parenting journey?
- o Wrap up and goodbyes—**10 minutes**. Acknowledge the importance and challenging work of each parent in the group. Decide what tools, chapters, and stories to focus on in the next meeting. Allow everyone who wants to, to share a closing remark.

Keeping it going

- There are over 100 stories in the book, and all parents have many challenging moments. After the initial five meetings, there is plenty to more to discuss. Parenting is a long-journey and we deserve support the whole way through.
- Bring other parenting books to discuss. Look up our reading list at www.handinhandparenting.org/article/recommended-reading/
- Invite spouses to join if they have not already.
- Create your own or join the [Hand in Hand Parent Support group on Facebook](#).
- Dig deeper into Listening Partnerships and create your own with members of the group.
- Have more joy in parenting and share your experience with others. Invite new parents to join and learn more about Hand in Hand.





PLAY LISTENING

Promote your child's laughter to connect and release tension.



STAY LISTENING

Listen deeply with warmth and attention at the most challenging times.



SPECIAL TIME

Put your child in charge for a short chunk of time, giving your loving attention.



SETTING LIMITS

Stop off-track behavior with love, warmth, and respect.



LISTENING PARTNERSHIPS

Parenting is difficult. You do not need to do it alone.

