



Listening with Love: The Heart-Centered Approach to Parenting

As I always say when a parent walks into my office...
"Take a deep breath. Everything is going to be fine."

Then I go on to let them know...

"I want you to know that you're not alone in this journey. Before we talk about anything else, I want to hear about your child—the precious little one of yours who has their own unique way of seeing our world."

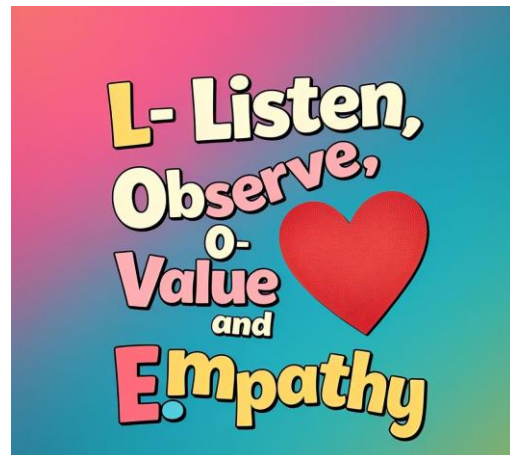
As both a specialist and a mother of neurodiverse children who has worked with countless others, I understand the worry in your heart when you notice that things are a little different than expected.

Maybe you've noticed that your little one seems to be in their own beautiful world. Perhaps they don't look up when you call their name, or they prefer playing alone rather than sharing those precious moments with you. You might have noticed they have their own special way of playing with toys or that shared smiles don't come as easily as you expected.

Now, I want you to know something: You're already being an amazing parent by paying attention to these signs. That worry you feel? It's your parental instinct speaking, and it's guiding you exactly where you need to go.

Let me share with you our approach—an approach very dear to my heart, for it is the foundation of FOS Centre. This approach is LOVE—for love truly is at the heart of everything we, as parents, do:

- **Listen:** Take a moment each day to simply be with your child. Watch how they move, how they play, and how they express themselves. Every child has their own language of love.
- **Observe:** Notice the little things that bring them joy or cause discomfort. Is it a certain sound? Specific textures? Particular routines? This knowledge is precious—it's your key to connecting.
- **Value:** Your child's unique way of experiencing the world is valid. When they line up their toys instead of playing pretend, they're showing you their beautiful, orderly mind at work.



- **Empathy:** Be gentle with yourself and your child. This journey might be different from what you imagined, but it's no less beautiful.

Now, while you're waiting for an appointment with a pediatrician, psychologist, behavior analyst, speech pathologist, or any other professional to better understand your child's uniqueness, here are some gentle activities you can try at home:

Of course, as the light that I am, I have some fun activities for you and your precious little one to explore starting today:

- **Make everyday moments magical:** During diaper changes or bath time, sing soft songs and make gentle eye contact. Don't worry if they don't look back right away—keep offering these loving moments.
- **Join their world:** If your child loves lining up toys, sit beside them and slowly add a toy to their line. Don't try to change their play—just be present in their space.
- **Create peaceful routines:** Children feel safe with predictability. Use simple words with actions: say "*Up*" when lifting them or "*Water*" before drinking. Repeat these consistently.
- **Gentle sensory play:** Offer different textures through soft fabrics, smooth balls, or squishy toys. Watch what they're drawn to—this is their way of communicating with you.



One very important thing I want you to know: You might hear terms like *early intervention* or *ABA therapy* on your journey ahead. These might sound overwhelming, but think of them as extra tools in your parenting toolbox—they're here to support, not replace, your natural parenting instincts.

Professional support is like having a loving extended family who understands your child's unique needs. When you begin this journey, you'll meet people like me and my team who have dedicated our lives to celebrating and supporting children just like yours.

Here's what that support might look like:

- A safe, loving environment where your child can explore and grow at their own pace
- Gentle guidance that respects your child's unique way of learning
- A team that sees your child's potential, not just their challenges
- Regular celebrations of every small victory—because every step forward is precious

Remember, as a parent, you have divine intuition. God blessed you specifically with this child because you have exactly what it takes to be their perfect parent. You have already taken the most important step—listening to your parental intuition.

Don't carry your concerns alone for another day. Reach out to us now—let's begin this journey together. Your child's future is bright, and we're here to help illuminate the path forward.

With love and hope,

Zusi Bolodeoku

(ACAS, QASP-S, IBA, Educational Psychologist)

CEO: FOS ABA CENTRE