Listen and Summarize (Elementary)

Can you think of a time when you were upset with someone and it was really hard to focus on what they were saying? Maybe they tried to explain themselves, and you just kept thinking about what you were going to say back. During a disagreement, it's important to try and understand the other person's perspective by listening closely to them. When it's difficult to focus on what the other person is saying, use the strategy ***listen and summarize*** to help you focus and show respect for the other person. When you ***listen and summarize***, you:
make eye contact with the other person,
listen carefully to what they are saying, and
use your own words to repeat back what they told you. You can use phrases like "It sounds like … " or "In other words … " to help you summarize what the other person has told you.

I used the strategy ***listen and summarize*** when I was upset at my mom for not letting me go to a friend's house after school. I was pretty mad at her, so when she started to explain why I couldn't go, it was hard to focus on what she was saying. I wanted to understand her reasons, though, so I made eye contact with her and listened closely to what she was saying. She wanted to check in with me after school and hear about my day before she had to leave for a meeting. She worried that I would already be in bed if she waited until after her meeting to see me. I summarized what she had told me by saying, "It sounds like you wanted to spend time with me because you have a late meeting and so you didn't want me to go to my friend's house." She said that she was glad that I understood, and I felt better about not being able to go to a friend's house. We enjoyed a little time together before she had to go to her meeting. By using the strategy ***listen and summarize***, I was able to better understand my mom's actions.

The next time you find it difficult to focus because you have big feelings, use the strategy ***listen and summarize*** to help you understand the other person and show them that you care.