

In the Moment Strategies

1. Make sure that you have your child's attention **BEFORE** you ask them to do something
2. Make sure that they understand what you have asked them to do. Use fewer, simpler words
3. Make sure that they are able to follow the number of steps required in what you have asked. Give fewer directions at a time
4. Make sure that you aren't leaving "gaps" in the instructions
5. It is 100% okay to tell your child: "first [what I ask], then [something good]"
6. Don't forget to consider what else is happening when you ask. Does doing what you asked require a transition? Interrupting something they like?
7. Don't forget to let your child know that you appreciate the instruction following with praise and/or access to the "then" item/activity

Get their attention

Ask

Wait

No response? Ask can't or won't?

Direction followed = reward!

7 Steps Approach



Step 1: Show your child that you are in control of the things that they want to hold or play with and that you will decide if and for how long they can have them.

Step 2: Show your child that you are fun. Make every interaction you have with them an enjoyable experience so that they will want to follow your direction to earn more time sharing those experiences with you.

***Pairing:** connect yourself to the things your child likes

Do's: let your child play with what they want, let them play the way they want

Don'ts: take away things, give instructions

Step 3: Show your child that you can be trusted. Always say what you mean and mean what you say. If you instruct your child to do something, do **NOT** allow them access to reinforcement unless they have complied with your request. Use prompting to completion if needed.

Step 4: Show your child that following your direction is beneficial and the best way to obtain what they want. Give your child easy directions as often as possible and then reinforce their decisions to participate by following those decisions with good experiences.

Step 5: Provide consistent reinforcement. In the early states, reinforce every time they follow your direction. Eventually change things so that you do not reinforce after each good decision.

Step 6: Demonstrate that you know your child's priorities as well as your own. Show them you know what they like!

Step 7: Show your child that ignoring your instructions or choosing inappropriate behavior will **NOT** result in the reinforcer.

Potential Problems and Solutions



Biggest challenge: Reinforcing uncooperative behaviors

*Some behaviors require more than just ignoring

Self-Stimulatory Behavior: Ignore, Block, Disrupt

With objects: block access

With hands/feet: ignore, block

With running/jumping/gross motor: ignore, block

With visuals: ignore, block

With vocals: ignore, disrupt

Destructive Behavior: Protect, Ignore, Remove

Items you can't afford to lose, are dangerous or are breakable: remove, protect

Less important items: ignore

Give least amount of attention

Aggressive Behavior: Protect, Remove

Protect staff and child

Remove from the environment (child or others)

Self-injurious Behavior: Protect

Protect by blocking self-hits, head slams/banging, bites