

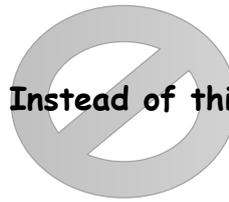


Giving Effective Instructions

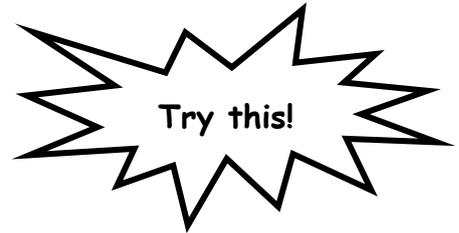
In our work with many children, we have noticed that if parents simply change the way they give instructions, they can often achieve significant improvements in the child's behaviour.

What to say

Instead of this:



Try this!



Avoid "Let's" Instructions

"Let's clean up your room." → "Please clean up your room."

"Let's get out your homework." → "Please get out your homework."



Don't Ask Questions

"Can you get dressed for school?" → "Please get dressed for school."

"Could you pick up your dishes?" → "Please put your dishes in the sink."



Be Specific

"Behave when you're at the table." → "Please eat quietly at the table."

"Try to be good today." → "Please listen to your teacher at school today."

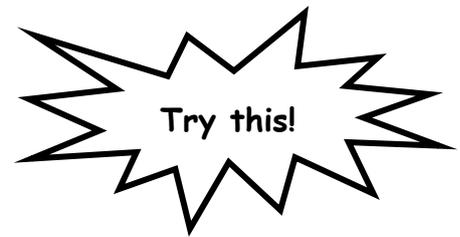
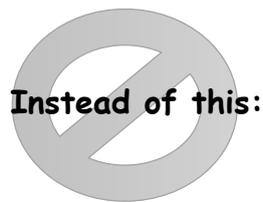


Avoid Lists

"Get up and get dressed, brush your teeth, and get your things ready for school." → "Please get up out of bed now." *(then wait before giving other instructions)*

"Get your homework finished and get all your chores done tonight." → "Please get out your homework and a pencil." *(then wait before giving other instructions)*

How to Say It



Get Your Child's Attention First

Giving an instruction from across the room. → Going close and getting eye contact.



Reduce Distractions

Having lots of people talking or things going on. → Making sure there are few distractions.



Prepare Your Child for Transitions

Saying, "Turn off the TV and brush your teeth." → Saying, "In 5 minutes, you need to turn off the TV and brush your teeth."



Use the Right Tone

Using an angry or demanding voice. → Using a calm and even voice.



Be Clear

Giving a complicated instruction. → Giving the instruction, then asking for it to be repeated back to you.

Do not explain why you are giving the instruction - keep it short and sweet - give the instruction and praise the behaviour when your child responds positively.