



LOOK Strategies for Families: Using Clear Directions

WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Using **clear directions** is a helpful way to ask your child to do something.

Children are more likely to do what we ask when...

- ◆ We have their attention. That way, they hear *what* we are saying and know we are talking to them.
- ◆ Directions are *simple, specific, and clear*.
- ◆ We ask them to do *one* thing at a time.
- ◆ We ask *right before* we want the child to do what we are asking.
- ◆ What we are asking is *reasonable*. This means that the child is able to do it.



TIPS FOR USING CLEAR DIRECTIONS:

Planning for using clear directions:

- ☑ Think of ways to tell your child what you *would like* them to do instead of what you *don't* want them to do. Coming up with these ahead of time will make it easier to remember and use them.
For example: hitting/kicking → "Keep your hands and feet to yourself"; yelling → "Use a quiet voice"; running → "Use walking feet"

Using clear directions:

- ☑ Come close to your child and get their attention. You can say your child's name followed by "please." This lets your child know you are about to ask them to do something.
- ☑ State the direction in a calm tone.
- ☑ Be specific ("Give them back the truck," instead of "Be nice," or, "Share").
- ☑ Tell the child what they *should* be doing rather than what they *should not* be doing ("Use a quiet voice," instead of, "Don't scream").
- ☑ Avoid saying the direction as a question. Asking, "Are you ready to go outside?" makes it seem like you are giving your child a choice. This can be confusing.

After:

- ☑ Use specific praise when your child does what you ask ("Great job listening to my directions so quickly!").
- ☑ Connect their behavior to something good that happens next ("Thank you for putting on your shoes. Now we can go outside!").



WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Using Clear Directions at Home

- ◆ Before bed say, "It's time to get ready for bed. Go put your pajamas on."
- ◆ To stop a behavior, say, "Your sibling is asking you to stop pulling on their arm. Please keep your hands to yourself."
- ◆ To remind your child of what they should be doing, say, "We're inside. Please use your walking feet. That keeps everyone safe."



LOOK at you: You are the expert on your child. We'd love to hear from you! Have you tried any of these strategies to ask your child to do something? What works for your family?