



Guiding Children's Behavior

Part 2: How to Help Your Child Cooperate



KEY CONCEPTS

- Use **distraction** instead of saying "no" (unless the child is about to do something dangerous/ hurt himself or someone else).
- Turn a task into a **game** to help your child complete a task.
- **Praise** positive behavior AND **ignore** mildly negative behavior; praise rather than criticize
- **Prepare** children through **explanations** so they know what to expect & know how to act.
- Give **choices**: This is part of "sharing control." It helps a child develop a sense of knowing her own interests.

- To encourage **independence**: Give child 1 OR 2 STEP INSTRUCTIONS.
- When **giving instructions**, make sure you have your child's attention and that she is not distracted.

- When helping children **change activities**:
 - prepare a few minutes ahead and remind them when it is time
 - ignore protests, don't argue, and use praise

- To help children **behave in public**, prepare them ahead of time so they know what to expect and the behavior you expect from them. Use positive language.



TIPS FOR GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

When needing to accomplish a task, turn it into a game to **build cooperation**:

- Make it a race—who can clean up the fastest?
- Sing a song while you work
- Shoot hoops as you pick up clothes to put in the laundry basket

Share control by asking if:

- Your child wants juice or milk with dinner?
- Your child would like to wear the blue or green outfit today?
- Your child would like to pick which story you read at bedtime?



SUGGESTED PRACTICE ACTIVITIES



The Hot or Cold Game

Materials: an object that you can hide for the child to find, i.e. a red ball.

Tell your child that they get to be the “Finder.” Show him/her the object that you will be hiding somewhere in the room. Send him/her out of the room while you hide the object. Bring the Finder back into the room to look for the ball. Tell them that when they are getting “hotter” they are getting closer to the hidden object, but when they are “colder” they are getting further from the object. While they walk around the room looking for the object shout out: “You’re getting hotter” or “you’re getting colder.” Play until the object is found. Let your child hide the object while you go out of the room to be the Finder.

Variations: You can play a song while you are hiding the object, and when the music stops your child will know that it is time for them to come back in the room to find the object.

You can also play while speaking louder or softer, instead of hotter and colder, depending on how close or far the Finder is from the hidden object.



Peek-a-Boo Picture

Materials: small cloth or paper towel, pictures of objects your child can name or recognize (from pictures you’ve taken or cut-out pictures from magazines)

Place one picture in front of your child and say what it is. Cover the picture with the cloth and ask, “Where is the bottle?” When your child has uncovered the picture, have him or her say the name of the object (“That’s right. It’s a bottle.”).