

10 Ways to Help Children Listen!

- 1.** Get their attention before you speak. Stand close or kneel, look in their eyes. Use their name, proceed with instruction. Ex: “Mary, it’s time to clean up now”.
- 2.** Don’t use the word “we” (“We must start getting ready for our lesson now”) no “team approach. Things happen quick, make it fun easy to learn. YOU are in charge. Be clear that something needs to be done, and that this child is the one who must do it.
- 3.** Give instructions to children in one simple short sentence. Don’t give reasons or explanations. Give specific praise when they listen and do, this is the time for a polite “thank you” etc.
- 4.** Give one instruction at a time. Ex: “Mary, it’s time for you to pick up the blocks”. When complete, then say: “Mary, come to the carpet so we can get ready for group time”.
- 5.** When child is being defiant, don’t say please when repeating the instruction. This eases the instruction and gives room for them to argue.
- 6.** Modulate your voice tone to be firm & authoritative. Don’t shout. Don’t let your voice rise at the end of a sentence or your instruction will sound like a question. Don’t sound uncertain, the child can perceive that and take advantage.
- 7.** Be confident. Decide what you will do if they ignore or disobey you. Ex: Take away a toy, place a mark by their name, tell them you will inform their parent, etc. Teach logical, fair consequences. Ex: When you do this, then this happens **or** if you don’t do this, then this happens. That will make sense to them.
- 8.** Be consistent, don’t make threats, follow through with what you say at all times.
- 9.** Allow a reasonable amount of time for child to comply. Ex: you want the child to pick up the blocks, give them about 1 min. to get started after you give instruction. Give advance notice when possible. Ex: “Mary, in 5 minutes it will be time to pick up the blocks”. Provide visual or audible signal like blinking the lights or putting on a special song to let them know something is about to happen.
- 10.** Phrase instructions in the positive Ex: Instead of this: “Don’t knock the blocks over” Say: “blocks are for building, keep them on the carpet”.

“Always catch them being good”

Ex: “I like it when you look at me when I’m talking” **or** “You’re very kind to share your crayons” etc...