

Tell Me What To Do Instead!

Family Version



COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY

1. Tell your child what to do instead of what not to do.
2. Show your child by demonstrating, modeling, or using a picture of the action.
3. Clearly and simply state what you expect your child to do.
4. Remember young children use inappropriate behavior because they may not understand the social rules and/or because they are unable to consistently apply what they are in the process of learning.
5. Talk to young children using language they understand. Young children may not understand a word like “don’t” because it is a short word for “do not” and he/she may not know what the “negation” of a word means.
6. Encourage your child in a way that lets him/her know that he/she is exhibiting the desired behavior. Use positive, descriptive acknowledgement while the child is making an effort or is doing the desired behavior.
7. Some children will respond better to more subdued expressions, and acknowledging them in a “matter of fact” way might be more effective.
8. For the most part, be enthusiastic and generous with encouragement. Most children can never get enough!

Examples:

Avoid	Say/Model	Positive Descriptive Acknowledgement
Don't run!	▪ Walk ▪ Use walking feet ▪ Stay with me ▪ Hold my hand	▪ You're holding my hand. That is so respectful. ▪ You walked carefully when carrying your drink. You made a safe choice. ▪ You are so friendly to walk beside me and keep me company.
Stop climbing!	▪ Keep your feet on the floor ▪ Do you need something up high? Let's find a safe way to reach it	▪ Wow! You have both feet on the floor! You are being safe. ▪ You asked for help to get something, you are being careful. ▪ You really like climbing! I'm glad we went to the park.
Don't touch!	▪ Look with your eyes ▪ Keep your hands down	▪ You were really listening; you are looking with your eyes! ▪ You kept your hands down. That is respectful.
No yelling!	▪ Use a calm voice ▪ Use an inside voice ▪ Turn the volume down	▪ You are using a calm voice! You look happy. ▪ You are using a soft voice inside the house. That will help Daddy to finish his nap.
Stop whining!	▪ Use a calm voice ▪ Talk so that I can understand you	▪ You are talking so clearly! That is so easy to listen to. ▪ You told me with your words what was wrong. That is helpful. ▪ You used your words. How respectful!
Don't stand on the chair!	▪ Sit on the chair ▪ Chairs are for sitting ▪ Do you need something up high? Let's find a safe way to reach it.	▪ You are sitting on the chair. What a careful girl. ▪ You were responsible when you sat in the chair. ▪ You stood on the ladder. You chose to be safe.
Don't hit!	▪ Gentle hands ▪ Hands are for playing, eating, and hugging	▪ When you used gentle hands you were being respectful. ▪ You used your hands for clapping! You like being safe. ▪ You are hugging her. What a friendly girl.
No coloring on the wall!	▪ Color on the paper ▪ Put the paper on the easel if you want to color standing up	▪ Wow. You are coloring so carefully. You are focused. ▪ You put the paper on the easel. That is being responsible. ▪ You are an artist standing at the easel.
Don't throw your toys!	▪ Play with the toys on the floor ▪ Toys stay close to the ground ▪ Please keep the toys on the table ▪ If you are finished, please put the toys away.	▪ You are playing with the toys on the floor. So safe. ▪ You decided to keep the toys on the table. That will keep them out of the vacuum cleaner. ▪ You put the toys away all by yourself! It looks like you are finished with those. What will you do now?
Stop playing with your food!	▪ Food goes on the spoon and then in your mouth ▪ Say “all done” when you are finished eating	▪ You're using your spoon. You're being careful. ▪ You said “all done.” That is helpful. ▪ You are practicing manners by eating your food with a spoon and fork.
Don't play in the water/sink!	▪ Wash your hands ▪ If you're finished washing your hands, please dry them	▪ You washed your hands. What a healthy guy! ▪ You followed the hand washing steps! You try hard.