

# 5 Tips to Help Your Child Follow Directions

**Choose one strategy and begin implementing during one part of your day. Once you feel comfortable, expand on using that strategy during different activities in the day. Then begin working on another strategy in the same manner.**

- Provide choices throughout the day to give your child some control. These need to be choices you are comfortable with and can follow through on. For instance, choice of shirt, type of cereal at breakfast, brush teeth or PJs first, etc.
- Give short clear directions. Avoid vague instructions and reasons your child needs to follow the direction. For example, "Put your shoes on the mat" vs "Where should our shoes go?" or "We need to put shoes away so no one trips over them."
- Only give directions that you can follow through on. You can physically help your child "get down from the counter" but you cannot make your child say "please" or eat their carrots. If you cannot follow through, avoid giving the direction.
- Provide specific praise (and even an extra reward at times) when your child follows the instruction. "Thanks for sitting at the table. You get fruit snacks!" When your child does not follow through, do not provide attention or praise, withhold the item, and help them complete the direction.
- Avoid giving directions/instructions when playing or having a fun interaction with your child. Instead, comment about what is happening. Label the items they are using. Imitate actions they are doing.

