

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

Teaching your child to follow simple, one-step directions should be done throughout daily activities, but can be difficult when your young child has autism or a developmental delay that impacts their ability to understand language as well as their motivation to follow directions. Working on this skill during activities your child is already familiar with makes it functional and meaningful. Keep it playful to avoid "quizzing."

Play "give me the ____" to work on identifying objects. Put out your hand and point to the item you just named. Help your child pick up the item and put it in your hand if needed. Then say "Yes, pig!" or "That's the pink pig."

Examples:

- Puzzles -- Name the piece you want your child to get such as, "Get the car."
- Bath -- When washing, say "Give me hands, give me foot, give me your tummy."

During play, give your child directions that are common with the toy/activity. This will help them connect the direction with what they are doing.

Examples:

- "Push your car."
- "Throw the ball."
- "Pop the bubbles."
- "Open your book."

Connect the direction with part of the routine. After you give your child the direction, help them complete it until they can do this independently.

Examples:

- After meals, "Put your plate in the sink."
- Before putting on shoes, "Give me your foot."
- After diaper changes, "Put diaper in the garbage."

Use "First-Then" to increase your child's compliance with directions. Begin with two directions that your child is likely to follow or are fairly easy. Then move on to more difficult directions.

Examples:

- First shoes, then outside.
- First sit down, then fruit snacks.
- First diaper change, then iPad.

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Choose 3 directions that you are going to teach throughout the day. Make sure it fits with the activity or routine so your child begins to pair the direction with what is happening. For instance, you could say "Give me your foot" when it's time to get shoes on. You can work on the same direction during 3 activities or routines or just pick 3 directions and focus on each direction 1 time per day. Once these 3 directions are being done consistently, choose 1-3 more.

Direction #1:

Direction #2:

Direction #3:

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Routine or activity: What I'll do:	Routine or activity: What I'll do:	Routine or activity: What I'll do:
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If your child has difficulty following directions or you tend to see a lot of problem behaviors around following directions, try these suggestions:

- Start with directions that are involved in favorite activities to build quick successes.
- Praise your child's effort (even if it isn't perfect).
- You can give your child a small edible or another reward to increase motivation along with praise. For instance, "Great cleaning up toys" and give them a fruit snack. Only give praise and reward if your child made the effort. Do NOT give the reward until then.



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Direction #1:

Direction #2:

Direction #3:

Put it in the garbage.

Open the door.

Give me the _____.

Routine or activity:

Snack time

What I'll do:

When snack is over, I will hand him the plate and say, "Put it in the garbage." I'll point to the garbage can and lead him to it and help him put his plate in the garbage.

Routine or activity:

Going outside

What I'll do:

When we get to the garage door, I'll wait for him to open the door. If he doesn't, I'll say "open the door."

Routine or activity:

Playing with bubbles

What I'll do:

I'll blow the bubbles once and then close the container and put it down. I'll hold out my hand and say "Give me the bubbles" when he wants to do it again.

Routine or activity:

What I'll do:

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