

Tips for Providing Positive Directions

- Tell a child what to do instead of what not to do.
- Show the child by modeling or using a picture of the action.
- Specifically and simply state what you expect the child to do.
- Remember young children may use inappropriate behavior because they might not understand the social rules yet.
- Talk to young children using language they understand. Be cautious when using contractions or other high level vocabulary.
- Encourage the child in a way that lets him/her know that he/she is exhibiting the desired behavior.
- Be enthusiastic and generous with encouragement and specific feedback. Children can never get enough!

Examples

Avoid	Remember	Say/Model
Don't run	Walk Use walking feet Stay with me Hold my hand	I see that you are using perfect walking feet. Thanks for walking!
Stop climbing!	Keep your feet on the floor!	Wow! You have both feet on the floor!
Don't touch!	Keep your hands by your side. Look with your eyes.	You are really listening well. You are looking with hands by your side!
No yelling!	Use a calm voice. Use an inside voice (in a low voice tone).	Now I can listen, you are using a calm (inside) voice.

Tips for Providing Positive Directions

Handout with tips on providing positive directions for both infants and toddlers.

Avoid	Remember	Say/Model
Stop whining!	Use a calm voice. Talk so that I can understand you. Talk like a big girl/boy.	Now I can hear you. That is so much better. Tell me your words; what's wrong?
Don't stand on the chair!	Sit on the chair.	Thank you for sitting so nicely in your chair! Wow, you're sitting up big and tall!
Don't hit!	Hands down. Hands are for playing, eating, and hugging. Use your words (give child appropriate words to use to express emotion).	You are using your words! Thank you for using gentle hands and being nice to your friend!
No coloring on the wall!	Color on the paper.	Look at what you've colored! Pretty picture!
Don't throw your toys!	Play with the toys on the floor.	You're playing so nicely! You are using all the toys in the right way!
Stop playing with your food!	Food goes on the spoon and then in your mouth! Say, "all done", when finished eating.	Great! You're using your spoon! What nice manners, you said, "all done". You can go play now.
Don't play in the water/sink!	Wash your hands.	Thanks for washing your hands! I can tell they are really clean!





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Avoid	Remember	Say/Model
No biting!	We only bite food. Use your words if you get upset (give child appropriate words to use to express emotion).	You're upset, thanks for telling me!
Don't spit!	Spit goes in the toilet/tissue/grass. Use your words (give child appropriate words to express emotion).	You worked out your problems with words, what a big girl/boy! Thank you for using your words!