



Workbook Sample from

Positive Parenting Practices for
Young Children with Autism –
Parent's Workbook

1-866-811-8665

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MODULE

Teaching Children to Follow Directions

Main Ideas

- Reasons children do not follow directions
- Ways to make difficult directions easier to follow
- How to give directions that are clear and specific
- What to do when a child follows a direction
- What to do when a child does not follow a direction





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Activity Sheet

Answer the questions following each example:

1. Melanie wanted her daughter Megan to set the table for dinner. She said, “Megan, how about if you get the blue plates with the little flowers and the silverware and all the napkins and put them on the table at everyone’s place.” Megan looked very confused and didn’t even begin to follow the direction.

Why did Megan not follow this direction?

2. Kristina was watching her favorite TV show. Her mother called from the kitchen and said, “Kristina, pick up your toys.” Kristina didn’t even turn her head when her name was called.

Why did Kristina not follow this direction?

3. Alex and his father Arnold were having a wonderful time playing at the park. After about an hour, Arnold said, “Okay Alex, it’s time to go home. Come to the car.” Alex sat down on the ground and began to cry.

Why did Alex not follow this direction?

4. Rob was reading the newspaper while his son Joseph was playing nearby. After a short while, Joseph began to sneak up the stairs. Rob said, “Joseph, please stay downstairs.” Joseph giggled and ran up the stairs. Rob said, “Okay, now I’m going to get you,” and chased after him. By the time their chasing game was over, both Rob and Joseph were laughing.

Why did Joseph not follow this direction?



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Example Sheet

1. Nicholas and his mother Annie were playing with blocks. Annie gave the following directions within the first two minutes of play:
“Give me the red block.”
“Put this block on top of your tower.”
“Let’s build a gas station.”
“Go get a car.”
“Put the little man in the car.”
“Bring the car to the gas station.”
“Don’t knock down my tower.”
2. Casey was spinning a metal lid on the kitchen floor. This behavior was beginning to annoy his mother and she wanted it to stop. She knew, however, that if she told him to stop and removed the lid that he would cry and have a tantrum for a long time. Instead, she got out his favorite musical instrument toys and placed them on the floor near him. When Casey began to play with them, his mother removed the lid and placed it out of reach.
3. Paula said, “Jeremy, please put your clothes in the hamper.” Jeremy immediately stood up, picked up his clothes and put them in the hamper.



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Bringing It Home

Answer the following questions:

What is an example of an activity or time of the day when it is difficult for your child to follow directions?

Why is this activity or time of day difficult?

For the activity or time period you listed, how would you use one or more of the following strategies to make following a direction less difficult for your child?

1. Make the direction or transition more fun
2. Tell the child ahead of time what will happen
3. Allow enough time for the child to enjoy activity

How could you use one or more of the following strategies to reduce the number of directions you give during this activity?

1. Give directions only when necessary
2. Offer choices
3. Redirect child to a new activity



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In A Nutshell

1. There are many reasons why children may not follow directions. They include:
 - a) They don't understand what it means
 - b) They don't hear a direction
 - c) They don't want to do it
 - d) They want extra attention
2. Here are some guidelines for giving directions to young children:
 - a) Give only one direction at a time
 - b) Give directions that are short and simple
 - c) Be specific
 - d) State the directions positively
 - e) Make sure the child is paying attention to you when you give a direction
 - f) Give extra assistance, if necessary
 - g) Tell the child what to do rather than asking
3. It is important to try not to give too many directions to young children. A few guidelines for decreasing the number of directions you give are:
 - a) Give directions only when necessary
 - b) Offer choices
 - c) Redirect the child to a new activity rather than giving a direction
4. Directions to end a fun activity or begin an activity that a child dislikes are difficult directions for a child to follow. Some things you can do to make them easier are:



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- a) Make the direction or the transition from one activity to another more fun
 - b) Give the child a warning when you anticipate a difficult direction or transition
 - c) Wait until the child finishes or has had plenty of time to enjoy the activity she is involved in before giving a direction
5. When you give your child a direction, two things can happen. Either he follows it, or tries to follow it, or he refuses or ignores the direction. When he does follow a direction, praise or reward him.
 6. Give your child plenty of time (five seconds) to respond to a direction.
 7. If your child does not follow a direction, do not repeat the direction. Instead, physically guide him to complete the direction. This means, gently take his hand and guide him to complete the action you have asked him to do.
 8. Pick your battles. In other words, give directions that are important to you and that you are willing to follow through on.



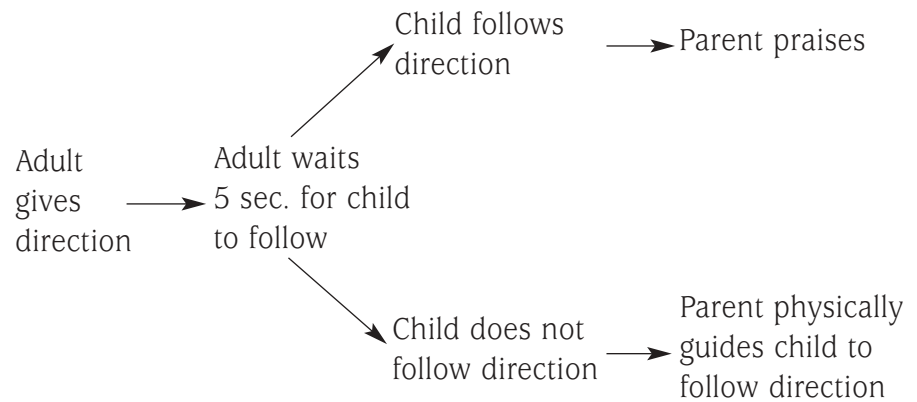
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In A Nutshell

Keep this as a handy reminder for giving directions:



How to teach children to follow directions

1. Make the direction or transition fun.
2. Give directions only when needed.
3. Tell, don't ask or suggest.
4. State your direction positively.
5. Make sure your child is attending.
6. Give directions that are short, simple, and specific.
7. Give extra assistance if necessary.
8. Allow enough time (5 sec.) for your child to respond.
9. Give directions only once.
10. Praise your child whenever he follows a direction. Use physical guidance when your child does not follow a direction.