

Giving Effective Instructions / Directives

The current distance-learning situation is forcing parents to take on a much larger role in teaching their students.

Delivering effective instructions and directives is an essential component for compliance. Below are some strategies to maximize the effectiveness of your directives.

Key Ideas:

- Ensure Attention
 - Before you can give your child a directive, you need to make sure that they are attending to you and not something else.
 - Say their name and have them look at you.
 - If you say their name and they do not respond, tap them on the shoulder.
 - Sometimes it may be necessary to physically interrupt what they are doing. (i.e. stand in front of the tv)

- Tone of Voice
 - Whenever possible, use a positive tone of voice.
 - HOW you say something can mean just as much as WHAT you say.

- Clarity
 - Be CLEAR and CONCISE
 - Avoid ambiguity or using language that is open to interpretation
 - Example: Instead of saying “Do your work”, say something like “Complete page 54 in your math book”
 - Their idea of “doing work” might be different than yours
 - Avoid using questions
 - When you use a question, you give them a chance to answer in a way you may not like and then you open the door to a power struggle
 - Examples: “Do you want to do your math, please?” “Let’s get that math done, ok?”

- Reward Reminders
 - As often as you can, pair your directives with a reminder of what they can earn for compliance.
 - Example: “Complete page 54 in your math book and then you can have 15 minutes of iPad time”
 - Establishing this contingency teaches them that we do what we NEED to do so we can do what we WANT to do