

Non-Compliance

Are you feeling frustrated that your child is not listening to you? Do you feel like a broken record saying the same things over and over again? Does your child refuse to do things that you ask them to do or just plain ignore your requests? If this sounds familiar, we might be able to offer some solutions!



While you might feel that your child's behaviour is the result of them just trying to annoy you or **push your buttons**, there is a good reason for their behaviour.

Your child's behaviour serves a purpose, it helps them achieve a goal. That is why they keep behaving in the same way. Would you stop doing something if it got you what you wanted?

What could their goal be? Maybe to get more of your **attention**. When your child misbehaves, do they get a little more of your attention? Do you stop what you are doing and focus entirely on them? In your child's mind, getting your attention, whether it's positive or not, may be their goal. Sometimes **any** attention is better than no attention at all.

Or maybe their goal is to **escape** or **avoid** what you are asking them to do. Maybe the homework from school that was assigned is too hard or overwhelming.

Your child might also want to just keep **accessing** the activity they are doing in that moment. Who really wants to turn off the television or stop playing an awesome video game to clean up their room?



Sometimes you have to adjust your expectations for your child when they are tired, sick or hungry, just as we might for ourselves. Can you remember a time when you had a rough day or weren't feeling the greatest? Kids have these days as well, and sometimes just remembering these factors can help lessen your feelings of frustration when your child is being non-compliant.

Are you communicating the right way?

Consider the following points to make sure your message heard:

- **Get your child's attention.** You need to stop what they are doing, such as pausing the television or setting down the tablet.
- **Be clear.** Use language that your child understands. Keep it simple and only give one instruction at a time, or break down the task into small and manageable steps.
- **Don't ask.** Tell your child what you want them to do in a firm voice. If you ask, they might say, "No!"
- **Say it once.** When you repeat your instructions many times, your child will ignore you.
- **Follow through.** If your child doesn't complete the task, help them.
- **Praise for a job well done.** Let your child know exactly what they have done well. Be specific and enthusiastic!

Don't Say...	Do Say...
"Stop," or "No thank you."	"Tell your brother to move over."
"Get ready for bed."	"Put your pajamas on and brush your teeth."
"Clean up this mess because it is dirty in here and we are having friends over to play soon."	"Put your dolls in your bin and the crayons in the box."
"Can you turn off the television?"	"It's time to turn off the television."
"Good job."	"You put all your clothes in the basket. Amazing!"
"Thanks."	"Thank you for taking out the recycling. You are awesome!"



What if my child has trouble with communication?

Think about using objects or pictures to help make your instruction clear. Show them a picture of what you want them to do.

A good trick is to have a second picture of something they really like.

FIRST clean up → **THEN** bike ride

FIRST	THEN
	

Does your child have trouble stopping activities?

Your child may not want to stop playing with their favourite games, toys or activities, but by giving them some more information and help, they might be more successful.

- ❑ Did you warn them something is going to change?
- ❑ Allow them some time to finish what they are doing, don't expect an immediate response.
- ❑ Can you make the change fun?
- ❑ Let them know when they can have the activity again. In an hour? After dinner?
- ❑ You can try letting your child know what the next activity will be.
- ❑ Make sure you let them know they did a great job stopping the activity when you asked.



Make The Task Fun

Pick your battles

Have you heard the phrase “Pick your battles?” This is the idea that if you don't have the strength to follow through, save your energy for when you do.

Here are some useful tips when picking battles with your children:

1. Only give an instruction when you are prepared to follow through. If you are busy, tired or can't follow up to make sure your child has completed the task, just wait until you can before you give the instruction.
2. Pick your battles **before** not after the behaviour starts. If you give your child a task and your child puts up a fuss, which makes you give up, you have just taught them that when they make a fuss, they do not have to complete the task.
3. Think about the importance of the battle. If it is about safety or breaking the law, then you have to “do battle”, but if it is about wearing the dirty shirt for a fourth day in a row, you might let it go.
4. Sometimes allowing for a natural consequence to happen is a better lesson than one given by a parent. If a child refuses to eat dinner, hunger just might give them the motivation to eat during the next mealtime!

Catch Your Child Being Good

Did you remember to...

- Give a warning that a change was going to happen?
- Let your child know what the next activity would be?
- Get your child's attention first?
- Break the task down into easy to follow steps?
- Clearly explain what the child had to do?
- Phrase it as a command and not a choice?
- Make the task fun?
- Follow through to ensure that the task was completed?
- Praise or reward your child for their compliance and completing the task?



Praise your Child

Tips and tricks

Still having trouble? Here are a few other ideas for your back pocket!



- Offer choices. For example, if you want your child to get dressed for school, ask them, "Do you want to wear your purple shirt or your green shirt?"
- Make it easier for them, by offering help if they need it. For example, if you tell your child to tidy up, help them.
- Make it fun! Turn collecting dirty socks into a game of basketball.
- Set a timer! Race the clock or offer an extra special reward for finishing your instruction quickly.



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