

What to Avoid When Giving Directions

- Blaming, criticizing, or showing disapproval: "It's your fault this house is a mess."
- Asking a question: "Do you want to clean your room?"
- Giving too many directions at once: "Clean your room, wash the dishes, and do your homework."
- Bringing up side issues: "Your grades stink. Now clean your room."
- Bringing up ancient history: "You've always been sloppy. Remember the time . . . ?"
- Yelling from a distance: "Get over here right now and get your shoes on!"

What to Do When Giving Effective Directions

- Be specific.
- Only give one direction at a time.
- Focus on the positive behavior you want to see, not the problem behavior: "Please put the dishes away now."
- Use a pleasant but firm tone of voice.
- Keep facial expression neutral.
- Make eye contact.
- Be polite and respectful.
- Follow through—see that the child does what is asked.
- Notice and praise when the child cooperates: "Thank you for putting your dishes away."