

Toddler Communication: Six Steps to Successful Directions

Tired of giving instructions that fall on deaf ears? Here's a proven plan to guide your toddler to follow directions, built on the principles of effective communication and development.



Step 1: Capture Their Attention

Walk Over

Instead of calling from across the room, approach them directly.

Crouch Down

Get down to their level to make a connection and show respect.

Make Eye Contact

Say their name and wait for them to look at you before giving the instruction.



Step 2: Minimize Distractions



Clear the Area

Remove enticing toys, screens, or other distractions.



Turn Off Noise

Silence background sounds to help them focus on your voice.



Step 3: Speak Their Language

Use Short Commands

Avoid complex sentences and use clear, simple instructions.

Be Specific

Instead of "Clean up," say "Put the blocks in the box."

Age-Appropriate Steps

Start with one-step instructions and gradually add complexity as they mature.

Step 4: Confidently Communicate



Calm and Confident

A calm, assertive tone creates a sense of security.



Positive Body Language

Maintain eye contact, smile, and use gestures to emphasize your words.



Step 5: Give Them Time to Process

1

Wait

Allow 7-10 seconds for them to understand and respond.

2

Praise

Acknowledge their efforts immediately with positive feedback.





Step 6: Gently Guide When Needed

1

Repeat

Reiterate the instruction, simplifying if necessary.

2

Demonstrate

Use gestures to clearly show what you want them to do.

3

Assist

If they still need help, offer a gentle hand to guide them.



Consistency is Key

While toddlers may not always get it right, consistent application of these steps builds their listening skills over time. Remember to celebrate their successes and be patient as they learn to navigate the world of instructions.