



# Building Blocks

## for Parents

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## COMPLIANCE

If a child frequently does not comply with requests, yet the child could accomplish the behavior "if he wanted to", a major curriculum goal should be to increase the frequency of compliance.

1. Children who are non-compliant or oppositional typically consume an undue amount of parent/teacher time. The child demands and often gets a good deal of attention; he "stands out" in the classroom. It is vital to provide attention only when the child does comply with requests. Attention is a powerful reinforcer, so catch the child following any direction and provide attention immediately following the desired behavior.
2. It is often possible to prevent non-compliant behavior from occurring by providing the child with a choice of behaviors selected by the adult. Saying "Johnny, you can go to bed now or after the TV show is over," gives the child the opportunity to make his own choice.
3. Letting the child know that you are going to make a request ahead of time lets him know that the activity is going to change: "In a few minutes dinner will be ready," or, "In a little while it will be time to pick up the toys." This is much better than interrupting the child in the midst of an activity.
4. Expecting the child to comply with a direction is conveyed if the child is told to do something rather than asked. Saying, "Do you want to go to bed now?" or, "Do you want to come in for dinner?" can be answered with a "no" just as appropriately as with a "yes". Expect compliance, give the child a reasonable choice and non-compliance can frequently be prevented.
5. It is best to tell the child what to do rather than what not to do. Telling the child not to throw the cup may cue the behavior you are attempting to avoid. Saying "When you've finished, put the cup on the table and you can have more," is a positive statement suggesting compliance and reinforcement.
6. If the child frequently does not comply with requests, try not to give an order unless you are close by to give physical assistance should it be necessary. If you have asked a child twice to pick up a toy and nothing happens, help the child follow your direction by bending him down and with your hand over his, pick the toy up. Then provide immediate reinforcement, "Good Johnny, thank you for picking up the toy!"
7. Remember, avoid giving orders when busy with another child, while on the telephone, or in another part of the room. It's important that your response to non-compliance is consistent, so delay directions until you can physically help the child follow through, should that help be required.

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