STEPS TO GIVE EFFECTIVE COMMANDS

1

Commands should be direct rather than indirect

Say "Please hand me the car," rather than "Will you hand me the car?"

A direct command makes it absolutely clear that the child is being told to do something **NOT** asked. It is not a choice.

2

Commands should be stated positively

Say "Please sit down," rather than "Stop running around."

The command should tell the child what **to do** rather than what not to do. Avoid the words "No", "Don't", "Stop", "Quit", or "Not" as sometimes they may invite opposition from your child.

3

Commands should be given for one thing at a time

Say "Put the cars in the box" rather than "Put the cars in the box and put the lid on the box and put the box on the shelf" or "Clean up the room."

Multipart commands are hard for children to remember. Inclusive commands are unclear because each individual task is not specified.

4

Commands should be specific

Say "Please hand me the toy" or "Sit on the floor" rather than "Settle Down" or "Behave"

Vague commands do not let your child know what you expect for them to do.

5

Commands should be given in a normal tone of voice

"Please hang up your coat."

Commands stated in a tentative tone can suggest that compliance is optional. Raising your voice can make the interaction unpleasant. You don't want to teach your child to ignore polite commands and only wait for your angry tone of voice to signal that you really mean it.

6

Explanations should be used before a command is given

Say, "It's time to go to school. Please put your shoes on." rather than abruptly saying "Put your shoes on."

Giving a reason before the command may increase your child's compliance and lets your child understand the reason they are being told to do something.

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