

## Ten Variables That Affect Compliance

### Precision Requests

1. **Format:** Phrasing requests into direct requests is more effective than asking in the form of a question. For example, instead of saying "Would you put that toy down?" it is more effective to say "I need you to put the toy down."
2. **Distance:** Making requests when the child is close, makes the request more effective. Try to be within one meter or an arms length away when you make a request.
3. **Eye contact:** Try to make eye-contact or ask the child to look into your eyes.
4. **Two requests:** Try not to ask more than twice and do not give multiple requests rapidly. If you have multiple requests, give one, wait for compliance, then give the next, and so on. For example a request such as this, "Put your toys away, put that truck up there, don't leave those blocks there" can be confusing.
5. **Loudness of Request:** Try to use a soft but firm voice, yelling or showing anger can make the child's behavior more intense or can make them withdraw.
6. **Time:** Give the child time to comply after giving a request (3-5 seconds). During this short time period, don't converse with the child (i.e. no arguing, excuse making), restate the request and look into the child's eyes and wait for compliance.
7. **Start requests:** Try to make positive requests of a child that require them to start an appropriate behavior (i.e. "Please sit down") rather than making a request for them to stop a behavior ("Stop jumping on the bed")
8. **Nonemotional Requests:** It is important to control negative emotions when making a request (e.g. avoid yelling, name calling, guilt-inducing statements, and roughly handling). Negative emotional reactions can escalate the child's negative behavior and also demonstrate a poor model of how to behave.
9. **Descriptive Requests:** Requests that are positive and descriptive are better than ambiguous or global requests (i.e. "Look at my eyes, and listen with your ears," is better than "Pay attention.")
10. **Reinforce Compliance:** Often when we request a behavior we forget to reinforce the positive behavior, but if you want the child to continue positive behaviors remember to genuinely reinforce them each time.

\*This hand-out was adapted for preschool parents from "Ten Variables that Affect Compliance", *Best Practices: Behavior and Educational Strategies for Teachers*