

Parenting Tip: Redirection

How many times in a day do you catch yourself telling your child to “stop that” or something similar? As natural as it may be to respond this way, these statements are not very effective. This is why you find yourself saying these phrases often. Your child doesn’t know what he/she is supposed to do for you instead. Redirection is more likely to work. It is effective for children, youth, and even adults. In this Tip Sheet we are going to use the term ‘child’.

What is redirection?

Redirection is fairly simple. Instead of commenting on what you don’t want to see, you make a **very simple request** that your child is **likely to follow**. It requires some practice. If you simply tell a child to stop an activity, this only does half the job. The other half is to give the child appropriate alternatives or outlets for his/her behaviour (Brown, 2014).

How to use redirection

Your child is doing something that you want to see stop...

1. Take a deep breath and plan your request
2. Do not say anything about what he/she is doing
3. Use a neutral voice and provide a simple instruction that will
 - a. Be easy for your child to follow
 - b. Result in him/her doing something else instead
4. Praise your child for listening
5. Now help him/her get busy with an activity or make ongoing activities a little easier

Example #1

Johnny is walking around the kitchen banging on the counter.

Give Johnny a plastic container and ask him to put it away. Provide whatever help he may need to do this.

Respond with praise like “thanks for helping” or “that was great” and help him find something else to do.

Voila! No more banging and you didn’t even need to comment!

Example #2

Johnny is watching television and he is jumping on the couch.

Extend a quiet toy that he likes and ask him to come and take it.

Once he gets off the couch to get the toy, sit quietly with him for a little while or offer a blanket on the floor to sit on.

Wow! He is not jumping and you didn't even have to tell him to stop!

Helpful Tips

This is a new habit; reward yourself when you do it.

Track how often you catch yourself going back to reprimands or old habits. Think about how you could use redirection the next time.

Enlist help. If you are lucky enough to have other caregivers in the home, remind one another to use redirection when the opportunity is there.

Reference: Brown, S. (2014). *Toddler discipline: Guide your toddler's behaviour with these tools*. Retrieved from <http://babyparenting.about.com/u/ua/discipline/toddler-discipline-tips.html>

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