

TOOLS TO ENCOURAGE COOPERATION FROM YOUR CHILD - PART TWO



We are regularly asked by parents, "How do I get my child to do what I need them to do?" Our favourite strategies to recommend are those from a fantastic book about effective communication with children:

How to talk so kids will listen and listen so kids will talk

by **Joanna Faber and Julie King**

Here is our summary of the tools they encourage to engage cooperation when you have made a request of your child.

first

You must acknowledge your child's feelings. Don't know what we are talking about? Flip back to Part One of this handout. It is a crucial first step that will enable success.

Be playful

This can be such a fun and powerful tool to promote cooperation! Try making an inanimate object talk, turn a boring task into a challenge or creatively present an instruction using a bit of silliness (for example having a teddy bear give the instruction).

OFFER A CHOICE

When there is a task that has to be done right now, try to think about some aspects of this task that could be negotiated and the child can have control over. For example, "Would you like to bring a toy or snack when you get into the car."

PUT THE CHILD IN CHARGE!

If a child is wanting to be in control, why not let them? Think about how they can have control while still achieving the task. For example, if your child has to complete three activities (for homework, or to get ready for school), let them pick the order.



Give Information

While tempting to say "Because I said so!" it is really important to provide the explanation as to why you would like them to stop a behaviour or complete a task. For example, "When we leave the cap off the glue, it will dry out and then we can't use it again!"

Say it with a word or gesture

If there is an instruction that you find yourself repeating again and again and again... and again, this is a great strategy! Simplify the instruction to a gesture (e.g. point to the jacket that has been left on the floor) or just use one word ("jacket"). The child will fill in the missing information and be telling themselves what to do.

Describe what you see

Using a simple descriptive comment without accusation, frustration or demand in your voice (not a simple ask at times, we know!) can really help to promote cooperation. For example, "I see a jacket on the floor."

DESCRIBE HOW YOU FEEL

We have feelings too, we're not robots! It can be a very powerful tool to show children how we are feeling in a calm and explanatory way. This can model vocabulary that they can use for themselves too.



Write a Note

This is for those instructions that have you feeling like a broken record. If you can't bring yourself to say it out loud (again!) then why don't you write it down? Don't worry if your child can't read yet, the mysterious power of a written note will have the desired effect! For example, an appointment card for bath time, or a note that says "kitchen opens at 8 am".

Take Action Without Insult

Tell the child your plan of action, in a calm tone. For example, "I'm taking you home now. I don't want anyone to get hit by a rock."

Give it a go!

Pick one of these and try it out. For more information and strategies, we highly recommend reading the book. Still unsure? Our Qualia therapists can help with encouraging cooperation from your children.



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