

Practical Communication Strategies: Improving Compliance at Home During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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April 16, 2020 12 – 1 PM

<https://mssm.zoom.us/j/99306322457>
Meeting ID: 993-0632-2457



Agenda

- Brief Introductions
 - Pilar Trelles, MD
 - Michelle Gorenstein, PsyD
 - Jessica Zweifach, PhD
- Compliance and listening as a behavior
- Antecedent Strategies
 - Relationship
 - Predictability
 - Effective Instructions
 - Other ways to use Language
- Consequence Strategies
- State of Mind
- Question and Answer

Compliance as a Behavior

- Why should we make this a focus?
- Right now we are: parents, teacher, coaches, chefs, therapists
- Listening as a **behavior**
 - We can think about how to improve it through changing **antecedents** and **consequences**

Compliance as a Behavior: Antecedent Strategies

- Building on positive relationship through daily special time
 - Consider number of demands we place daily
 - Use validating language at other times
- Increase predictability through using visuals and routines
 - Visuals for school day and other routines
 - Mealtime, bedtime, any other moments that are a struggle
 - If-Then Boards, Visual Schedules, Token Economies

Compliance as a Behavior: Antecedent Strategies

Effective Instructions:

1. Direct (avoid questions, let's): *Please bring your plate to the sink*
2. Specific: *Clean up this mess!* vs. *Please put the blocks in the bin*
3. Only 1-2 at a time
4. Be close, obtain eye contact
5. Followed by 5-10 seconds of silence

Avoid: buried, chain, questions, repeating, vague, let's

Compliance as a Behavior: Antecedent Strategies

- **Say it in the Positive:** what you want *to* see

Instead of this...	Try this...
Don't touch that box	Just look at the box
Don't be rough with her	Use gentle hands please
Stop screaming	Please use a quiet voice

- **Transitional Warnings** – Language in addition to visual prompts
- **When-Then Statements** – reinforce with a more enjoyable task
- **Offer a choice** – when possible, gives child a sense of control

Compliance as a Behavior: Consequence Strategies

- **Praise (increases behavior)**
 - Give child labeled praises throughout day for LISTENING
 - Motivating, reinforcing
- **Active Ignoring (decreases behavior)**
 - Helps us focus on the positive
 - Take attention away from negative behaviors
 - Extinction burst
- **Rewards / Behavioral Plans**
 - Concrete reinforcements for compliance

Thinking about Tone of Voice to Increase Compliance

Goal is to give directions or a command in a **calm, neutral tone**.

- Using a questioning tone may be interpreted to mean the command is optional
- Using a loud or angry tone makes the interaction unpleasant and establishes a cycle where your child learns they do not have to listen unless you are yelling

Staying Calm to Increase Compliance

- Do not get dragged into an argument or long discussion as it will not end well.
- If you find yourself engaged in this pattern, it is important for you to disengage immediately
 - Create a tagging-out system with another adult in the household
 - Model taking a break

Example: “I am getting frustrated as I asked you to put away he blocks or the cars three times and you did not listen, so I am going to take a five minute break to calm down.”

Caregiver Self-Care: The Basics



Physical Health

- Nutrition
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Medical health

Emotional Health

- Stay connected
- Spirituality
- Find internal space for yourself

Questions & Answers

- Thank you for your attention and participation!
- Please write questions into chat feature and let us know of additional topics you would like covered
- For copies of slides, please email: audrey.rouhandeh@mssm.edu or bari.britvan@mssm.edu