



Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# How To Help Your Child Do What You Say

Your child can best follow your directions when he or she knows what you want. It helps if you expect the same behavior most of the time. Each time your child does not do what you say, respond the same way. This will help your child know what to expect from you.

- Before you speak, look into your child's eyes. Get your child's attention. If your child is running, he or she may not hear you.
- Talk in a calm, but firm voice.
- Tell your child what you want only once.
- Give simple directions.
- Describe what you expect your child to do. Be very clear. Instead of saying, "be nice," say "pet the cat this way."
- When you can, tell your child what to do instead of what not to do. Say, "speak softer please," instead of "stop yelling."
- Tell your child when you expect it to be done.
- Have your child tell you what you said. Does your child understand what you want?



**Get your child's attention  
before you speak.**

- **Ask your child to do it only if there is a choice. If your child must do it, tell your child what you want and when.**
- **Help your child succeed. Do not ask your child to do something he or she is not able to do.**
- **Be positive. Expect your child to obey.**
- **Notice when your child is good.**
- **Reward your child for good behavior with praise, hugs and time together. You may also reward your child with special toys or activities.**

**Other tips:**

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### **Now that you've read this:**

- Tell your child's nurse or doctor how you can help your child do what you say. (Check when done.)**
- See also: What To Do When Your Child Doesn't Do What You Say (Check when done.)**



**If you have any questions or concerns,**

- call your child's doctor or**
- call \_\_\_\_\_**

**If you want to know more about child health and illness,  
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital:  
1919 East Thomas Road in Phoenix  
602-546-1400  
www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com**

**Disclaimer**

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

#83 • Written by Paula Pastore, RN • Illustrated by Dennis Swain  
This handout is also available in Spanish as #263/83s