

# Tip Sheet: Giving Instructions

## How to Give Good Instructions:



### *Be Clear and Concise:*

- Make instructions short and to the point.
- Don't include more words than needed (i.e. "put shoes on" vs. "we need to leave right now! Go put your shoes on your feet").

### *Give One Instruction at a Time:*

- Do not give a long list of instructions, this may make the individual feel confused or frustrated (i.e. "put shoes on" vs. "put your shoes on, then your coat, then go meet me in the car").

### *Be Realistic:*

- Give instructions that the individual is able to follow.

### *Be Positive:*

- Tell the individual what you want them to do rather than what not to do.
- By telling them what to do instead, it sets a clear expectation (i.e. "don't run" vs. "walk please").

### *Don't Ask, Tell:*

- Tell the individual what to do in a firm, but pleasant voice.
- If you ask the individual to do something, you are giving them the opportunity to say "no" (i.e. "do you want to put your shoes on?" vs. "put your shoes on.")

# Steps for Giving Good Instructions

**1*****Get the individual's attention:***

- Say the individual's name
- Wait for the individual to respond to you and show you they are listening. (i.e. stops what they are doing, turns towards you, gives eye contact).

**2****Say Your Instruction:**

- Remember your rules for giving good instructions from page one.

**Reward follow-through:**

- When the individual listens to you, let them know they did a good job (i.e. "thanks for doing that").
- Be specific about what you are praising them for (i.e. "thanks for putting away the dishes").
- Be immediate with your praise; try to provide the praise immediately following the individual following through on your instruction.

**3****Some things to keep in mind when delivering instructions:**

- Offer choice whenever possible (i.e. "do you want to put away the dishes or sweep?")
- If possible, try to wait until an opportune time to deliver an instruction (i.e. don't provide an instruction when they are watching their favourite show)
- Pick your battles whenever possible.