

To make SJF a Positive Learning Environment

We listen actively and respond appropriately



We **look** at the person who is speaking



We **are quiet** while someone else is speaking

We **quickly follow the teacher's** directions



Getting children to stop, listen, think about what has been said and then respond appropriately can be very tricky. Within families this can be difficult too. Here are a few tips to try at home.

7 Steps to Get Kids to Listen

1. Get on Their Level

When you need your child's attention, make sure you **get their attention** - that means eye contact.

When you lower yourself down and look in their eyes, you not only verify they see and hear you, but you strengthen the communication as well. This is true for older children too.

2. Do Away with 'Don't'

Don't touch your brother. Don't run in the hall. Don't play with your food. Don't read the next sentence...

See what I did there?

Negative commands, such as "Don't" and "No" require kids to double process. Kids then must answer two questions:

- 1) What does she NOT want me to do?
- 2) What does she want me to do instead?

Instead of "Don't touch your brother,"

Try "Use gentle touches when touching your brother" or "Your brother doesn't want to be touched right now, so please keep your hands folded while we are in the car."

Instead of "Don't leave your toys all over the floor,"

Try "Please put your toys in the toy box."

Instead of "Don't run in the hall,"

Try "Please walk in the hall."

3. Say YES to YES

Think about it for a moment. What is your normal, knee-jerk reaction to the 10,000 requests you get from your child every day? "NO," right?

When you're bombarded with requests, it's difficult to sift through them in a meaningful way, so you just deliver canned responses— *"No, not today."* *"No, I don't have time for that."* *"No."* *"Nope."* *"Nada."*

When "No" is your constant go-to answer, it's no wonder kids stop listening to YOUR requests!

Look for reasons to say yes more often.

Instead of *"No we can't go to the park,"*

Try *"The park sounds awesome! Should we go Friday after school or Saturday morning?"*

Instead of *"No, you can't have ice cream"*

Try *"Ice cream is delicious! Would you like to have it for dessert on Saturday or Sunday evening?"*

While there will still be situations that require a hard "No," by offering more "yeses" you'll increase the chances your child/ren will tune back in.

4. Shorten your Speech

From one parent to another, I know many of us are guilty of this. Parents tend to turn a five-second answer into a five-minute dissertation! When trying to get your kid's attention, be as concise as possible and they won't even have time to tune you out!

5. Say Thank You in Advance

Help your kids make an appropriate choice by taking this leap of faith.

Your pre-emptive *"Thank you for hanging up your towel after your shower,"* will encourage your kids toward good behaviour much more than, *"I better not see your towel on the floor again!"*

People, and yes, even children, will usually live up to our expectations if we manage them in a positive way.

Letting them know, in advance, that you trust them to do the right thing will cultivate open communication lines and increase the likelihood the task will get completed.

6. Ensure Comprehension

A simple way to ensure your child has heard you and that she understands is to ask her to repeat back what you said. In the medical field, studies have shown that 40-80% of the information doctors relay to patients is either forgotten completely or misunderstood (and keep in mind, these are ADULTS we are talking about, not just children).

To combat this misunderstanding, doctors have begun using the teach-back method which calls on patients to "teach back" to the doctor what treatment instructions they were just given.

This method has been shown to drastically increase information retention from patients.

The same tool can be used effectively with children. Once you've made eye contact, shortened your speech, and clearly explained what you need your child to do, calmly ask your child to repeat back what they've just heard.

By ensuring everyone is on the same page, you will see an instant improvement in communication and cooperation in your home.

7. Make an Observation

If you see a task that's been left undone, don't dive in with a big reprimand, just make an OBSERVATION: *"I see a jacket on the floor,"* or you can ask, *"What is your plan for taking care of the garbage today?"*

"What is your plan for?" is one of my favourite strategies to avoid power struggles. It's empowering because it's assumptive on your part that they have a plan—and gives your child an opportunity to save face and quickly come up with a plan in the moment if they didn't already have one!

"Oh yeah! I was planning on taking out the garbage right after I finish my lunch." This gives you the chance to put a positive parenting empowerment spin on the whole conversation! *"That's awesome—I really appreciate your help".*