



Focus on DO

Reinforce Good Behavior

- Use positive words to teach children. Say “do” instead of “don’t” and “yes” instead of “no.” Rather than saying, “Don’t shout!” say “Do kindly use your inside voice.”
- Go to a different space to show a preschooler where a behavior is allowed. For example, move a child doing somersaults in a crowded room to a more open area.
- Help children make good choices by giving options, such as “Do you want to put away the blocks *before* or *after* you pick up the crayons?” Then follow up and say “Yes you can do that first.”
- Keep calm. Take a deep breath and think about how to talk calmly with your preschooler about their actions.

Benefits of using DO vs. DON’T

- Focusing on positive behavior leads to more positive behaviors.
- Adults have fewer power struggles with children.
- Children view themselves as capable and successful.
- Adults have more positive and healthy relationships with children.

Keep a positive focus!

- When adults focus and comment on negative behaviors, children often act out in response.
- Focus on positive behaviors you want to see instead of the negative behaviors you don’t want to see. Change your “don’t” into a “do!”



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Why focusing on the positive is important

- Children learn to trust adults to stay safe from people or things that may be harmful. When children hear “do” more than “don’t” they are more willing to cooperate.
- Preschoolers struggle to stop a behavior once they hear it described. For instance, a preschooler who hears, “Do not eat the candy” will only be able to think about eating the candy.
- Children respond positively when adults focus on the positive rather than the negative.

Helpful ways to use DO instead of DON'T

1. Teaching: Give instructions to children without using “no” or “don’t.” Teach children what to do. For example, instead of saying “Don’t run near the cars!” say “Please hold my hand.”
2. Redirection: Use redirection to distract a child. Rather than saying DON’T to the current activity, offer the child a more acceptable activity. For example, instead of saying “Don’t color on the book,” say “Here is a piece of paper you can color on.”

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