



IES Grant #
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Universal strategy Keeping it Positive

When children engage in challenging behavior, it's easy to say "stop" or "don't do that." By reframing these into positive statements, you can teach your child what TO DO .



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It is possible that your child may not be hearing you say to **STOP** doing what they are doing. Instead, they may only be hearing you label the behavior they are engaging in. It is also possible that they continue engaging in that (or another!) challenging behavior because they don't know what else they should do.

What you say...

What your child hears...

"No hitting your brother."

"Don't scream when you want a toy."

"If I can't hit my brother, maybe I should bite him?"

"Scream when I want a toy."

"Don't do that!"

"Do that!"

"I don't know what you want me to do, so I'll keep crying"

"We don't cry when we don't get our way."

"Stop running in the house."

"If I can't run, I'll jump!"



For more information on responding to challenging behavior, [click here](#).





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Keeping it Positive

Reframing Your Statements



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Reframe your statements to include positive language that tells your child what behavior they **CAN** engage in. Your statements can also include choices within the activity or between new activities. Providing a verbal reminder of the expectations for an activity and modeling how to meet that expectation are great ways to support your child and prevent challenging behavior.

What you said before...

What you can say instead...

"Don't do that!"

"Stop running in the house."

"No hitting your brother."

"Don't scream when you want a toy."

"We don't cry when we don't get our way."

Avoid attending to the challenging behavior.

"Remember, walking feet in the house"

"Try doing this instead."

"You can ask for a turn."

"I see you are upset. Do you want to keep playing or take a break?"

"Do you want the train or the blocks?"

Provide positive descriptive feedback when your child begins to engage in the desired behavior.



For more information on how to respond to challenging behavior, [click here.](#)

