



IES Grant #
R324A160086

Teach Strategy

Ask for something

Your child may engage in challenging behavior to get a preferred item or activity, or to get more of something. Use these steps to teach your child that asking appropriately will reliably result in access to that item rather than engaging in challenging behavior.



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1

Identify times when you are able to provide your child with a highly preferred item or activity (ex: iPad, Legos, stuffed animal), or more of a preferred item or activity.

Create an opportunity for your child to ask by:

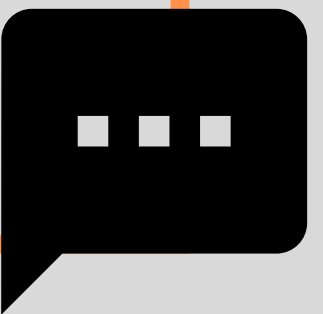
- providing them with a moderately preferred item for a few minutes and
- keeping the highly preferred item in sight, but slightly out of reach (ex: have it in your hands, next to you on the floor).



2

If your child appropriately asks, immediately provide them with the requested item and positive descriptive feedback for asking.

Keep in mind, appropriate asking should be based on your child's ability. If your child does not use words to communicate, you can accept eye contact, a point, a sign, or a reach as a request for the item.



3

- If your child does not ask, or asks inappropriately (ex: yelling), model the desired communication. For example, say: "You can say 'Legos please.'"
- If your child begins to engage in challenging behavior, stay calm and avoid attending to the behavior.
- Delay access to the item/activity until your child appropriately requests it.



4

Repeat this process several times throughout the day with different preferred things. Keep going until you notice your child asking for an item without a model or engaging in challenging behavior.

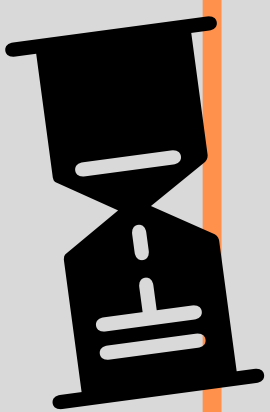
It is important to comply with your child's requests as often as you can while they are learning this skill. This helps them understand that they can gain access to the item by requesting it, rather than engaging in challenging behavior.



5

Remind your child to request items throughout the day by stating and restating how you want them to ask. You can also prompt asking for more when your child has had access to a preferred item/activity

Sometimes, preferred items/activities are not available (ex: you can't have the stuffed kitty in the bathtub). When this happens, let your child know the item is not available and when it will be available. For example, you can say "first bath, then you can have kitty."



Helpful Hints!

- If you tell your child they can have something at a certain time, make sure to honor that statement and provide the item at the time you said you would.
- When you don't have access to their preferred item (ex: left it at home) provide your child with choices of other items that are available.
- You can practice asking by encouraging your child to ask for items or activities that they want more of. Follow this same process, but instead prompt your child to ask for "more, please!"



For more information on how to teach your child new skills, [click here](#).

