Giving Clear Instructions

◊ Make eye contact.

◊ Use a loud firm voice.

◊ Be clear about what you would like the child to do.

◊ State an instruction (command) as such, not as a request or question.

◊ Only give one command at a time.

◊ Always praise and/or reward the child as soon as the instruction is followed.

◊ Administer an appropriate consequence if the child is noncompliant; then repeat the instruction.

Resource: Kolko, D. & Cupit Swenson, C. Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress 03
Giving Clear Instructions

Parent/Caregiver Worksheet

Example Scenario:
Your child has been playing with trucks and now dumps over a container of blocks all over the floor, creating a huge mess.

- State an instruction (command): “John, we pick-up our toys when we are done playing with them. Pick up your trucks before playing with your blocks.”

* Always praise and/or reward the child as soon as the instruction is followed: “John, great job picking up the trucks so quickly.”

* Administer an appropriate consequence if the child is noncompliant; then repeat the instruction: “John, since you did not follow my instructions, it’s time for a time-out. (after time-out) John, pick-up your trucks before returning to your trucks.”

Now, try it for yourself.
1. Pick a situation where you would need to give your child clear instructions:

2. State an instruction (command):

3. Praise and/or reward the child as soon as instruction is followed:

4. Administer an appropriate consequence if the child is noncompliant; then repeat the instruction:

Resource: Kolko, D. & Cupit Swenson, C. Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress 03