



The Noncompliant, Oppositional and Hyper-RE-active Child

These Recommendations work best with a system of incentives and consequences in place for behavior.

1. Low Expressed Emotion

This is the single most important modality for managing the Hyper-*re*-active child. Children who are oppositional and noncompliant often evoke emotional responses in caretakers which results in yelling, scolding or threatening with consequences. These same children, because of anxiety or other traits tend to hyper-*re*-act or misunderstand vocal tone, strong or even mildly negative emotions. They respond with anger which over time turns into resentment. It is up to you to **BREAK THE CYCLE.**

- Use a matter-of fact or neutral tone when re-directing the child from an inappropriate behavior.
- Your tone should be **firm** not **stern**. This will take practice. **Firm** is compatible with "kind" and "reassuring"; **stern** is not; **stern** is scolding.
- Practice sounding bored when the child's behavior appears to be deliberately provocative. The more outrageous the child's behavior the more bored you should sound.

TIPS

- Do not expect to manage your child with your voice
- Do not expect to manage you child from a distance.
- You physical proximity and YOUR focus enforces your authority and prevents your child from losing focus on your request.
- Manage your anger by managing your disappointment. Your child is not disobeying just to disobey. Usually he is not focused on what you are focused on.

2. Making a Request and Making it Stick

A neutral calm voice does not mean that you are a push-over as a parent.

- Notice first where the child's attention is focused. Often, you must first help him to **SHIFT HIS ATTENTION** from that focus to you and your request. This is the hardest step and may require several minutes when the object of his attention is a favorite pastime or electronic entertainment. Use physical proximity and a quiet voice; you may need to give a notice and even use a timer when asking him to relinquish a favorite activity.
- Use a positive or upbeat tone when giving the child a routine instruction. Repeat the instruction, if needed in the same upbeat tone especially for the autistic spectrum or ADHD child who has difficulty *shifting* attention.
- Along with the **second** prompt, if not already by his side, move to where the child is and make sure you have his attention.
- Repeat your request in a neutral tone but remind him in a positive tone of the incentive which you hope he will earn. Do not threaten the *loss* of the incentive or other consequence. If possible, do not talk about what he is doing; focus on what you are expecting him to do. *Stop talking or talk very little.* Use your body.
- Remove any distraction or other activity which is interfering with his compliance and position your body to make it clear that he will not engage in any other activity until the request is honored. *Use physical prompting unless it causes escalation.*
- Praise your child with a modestly positive tone when he completes the request (even if he had no choice or if you did most of it.)