

Strategies to Increase Success

Some of the activities in this toolkit may present challenges for your child that may not have been addressed within the activity sheets. The purpose of this document is to provide some strategies to help increase success while using the toolkit.

General Strategies

Positive Reinforcement

It may seem simple, but providing praise or a tangible reward when your child succeeds is an effective way of ensuring continued success. It is also a great motivator. Follow these guidelines to make your positive reinforcement as effective as possible:

- Make sure to provide reinforcement immediately after good behavior
- Make sure praise you give is specific (“I like how you were careful putting away those utensils”)

“First... Then...”

People are much more likely to do things they don’t want to do when they know they get to do something they do want to do next. If your child is resistant to completing tasks in this toolkit, try scheduling the tasks right before something they really look forward to. If they continue to object, you can remind them “first we’ll do this, then we can do what you want to do. The quicker we do it, the sooner we can get to what you want.”

Easy, Easy, Hard

Research has shown that success leads to success. If your child is having difficulty with one task, or is refusing to attempt it, try asking them to complete a few short, easy tasks you know they can do first. It can look something like this:

- (Easy) Ask them to wipe the table
- (Easy) Ask them to give you the rag so you can put it away
- (Hard) Ask them to clear some of the plates from the table

You know best which tasks are easy and which are hard for your child. Remember to provide lots of positive reinforcement after the easy tasks. This will make it much more likely that your child will try the harder task when you ask them to.

Offer Two-Way Choices

Rather than asking abstract questions that may prove challenging and frustrating to answer, consider asking your child to compare two options, and select which option is better.

Example:

Tommy always waits until the last minute to do his work, and doesn’t tell anyone when it’s done. Jenna does it right away and talks to her boss about it. Who is showing a good work ethic - Jenna or Tommy?

Offer “Yes” or “No”

Rather than asking your child to come up with their own stories or examples, consider asking your child to listen to your story, and then say “Yes” if it is a good example, or “No” if it is not.

Example:

My coworker leaves sticky notes all over his desk that have information like his passwords for websites, important phone numbers, and names of customers. Is he doing a good job protecting information, Yes or No?

Avoid Consequences

Try to avoid consequences, even if your child is getting frustrated or refusing to participate. Often our first instinct is to impose a punishment when children act out, but research shows that providing positive reinforcement is more effective for good behavior. Make sure it is clear to your child what you want them to do. It is okay to take a break and try again later.

Provide Warnings

Let your child know a few minutes before you are going to ask them to do something. About 5 minutes before it is time to start a work task, say “in 5 minutes, I’m going to ask you to do something for me.” Giving notice before transitioning between tasks helps lower frustration, especially if the task is difficult or not preferred.

Spread it Out

Many of the activities have multiple parts. If your child gets fatigued or loses focus easily, try spacing out each step of the activity. You can complete an activity over a couple of hours, days, or even weeks. Everyone develops skills and learns at a different pace.

For Non-Readers

If your child has limited reading ability or does not yet read, some of the activities listed in this kit may need to be adapted for them. In general, the best approach will be to replace written information with spoken information, or even pictures that communicate the same things. For example:

Visual Schedules

Visual Schedules use pictures or drawings in place of words.

Task Breakdowns

To help with learning a task, break the task into small individual steps. Take pictures of each step in the task you want your child to do. Put the picture/steps in order and provide it to your child to help them learn.