



FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS @ HOME



What is Following Directions?

Following directions is an important skill children develop in the early years. Expectations in school are often presented as multi-step directions (e.g., “Go get your pencil box, and then find a pencil and a green crayon”) and therefore, being able to follow directions is important for school success.

Directions can have a variety of concepts in them:

- **Location concepts:** such as “on”, “in”, “next to”, etc. (e.g., “Put your dishes in the sink”)
- **Temporal concepts:** such as “before”, “after”, “then”, etc. (e.g., “Go get the paint before you put on your smock”)
- **Sequence concepts:** such as “first”, “second”, “last”, etc. (e.g., “First you have to wash your hands and then you can help me cook”)

How can you support your child’s understanding of directions?

- Use everyday routines to support your child’s understanding of directions
- Break 2- and 3-step directions into shorter more simple directions (e.g., if your child struggles to follow “Go put your toy on the shelf and then get a book”, ask her to put her toy on the shelf and when she is done, ask her to get a book)
- Use gestures to support your message (e.g., you can point to the location where you want your child to put his backpack when you ask him “Put your backpack behind the bench”)
- **Have fun** while practicing following directions! Children learn better when they are having fun!



Daily Practice Ideas

Day 1: Bake cookies together: “Go get a bowl and a wooden spoon”, “Put the flour in and then stir”

Day 2: Play Simon Says: “Simon says clap your hands and then touch your tummy”, “Simon says bark like a dog before you give me a high five”

Day 3: Go on a Scavenger Hunt in the house: “Find a red crayon and a teddy bear”, “Go put the red crayon under the table”

Day 4: Go on a nature walk outside: “Find a leaf and a pinecone” “Put a branch on top of a rock”

Day 5: Follow directions using pictures in a book: “Show me the star and the moon”, “Show me the bunny next to a tree”

See back of page for additional information and resources!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Check out these links for more resources and activity ideas (ctrl + click on words in blue)

- There are lots of fun following directions songs on YouTube to help your child learn to follow directions through music and picture supports. Search "Following Directions Song" on YouTube.
- Many books offer great opportunities to follow directions in a fun way: *Press Here* by Hervé Tullet; *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* by Mo Willems; *No, David!* by David Shannon; *Don't Push the Button* by Bill Cotter. Click [here](#) for a list of books that can be used to practice following directions. Many of these books are available on YouTube.
- Check out this [article from Hanen](#) about everyday routines
- This [handout from Super Duper](#) explains directions and concepts in more detail.
- Click [here](#) for more ideas of fun following directions games you can play with your child.
- Click here for [free](#) printable following directions activities.

