

13 Tips for Giving Learners Effective Instructions

- ✓ **Gain attention;** decrease distractions.
- ✓ **Be close to learner** (within a few feet.)
- ✓ **Use terms the learner understands.**
- ✓ **Ensure the learner can complete the task.** Be ready to support as needed.
- ✓ **Use statements rather than questions.** E.g. “Pack your lunch”, rather than, “Is your lunch packed?” or “Can you pack your lunch?”
- ✓ **Be clear and specific.** E.g. “Start reading your book.” rather than “Begin.”
- ✓ **Use positive statements.** Say “Walk on the sidewalk.” rather than “Don’t walk on the grass.”
- ✓ **Start with a single task or step.** When you know your learner can do more, add additional steps.
- ✓ **Give a brief, simple explanation.** E.g. “Put your jacket on; it’s freezing out.”
- ✓ **Give the learner a few seconds to process the instruction without repeating.**
- ✓ **Motivate.** For non-preferred tasks, use the Premack principle to let them know something preferred is coming. E.g. “Clean up the blocks, then you can have snack.”
- ✓ **Celebrate.** Provide praise and reinforcement when a learner follows instructions.
- ✓ **Evaluate.** If a learner does not follow instructions explore reasons why. Develop a plan to help them be successful.