

Verbal and Physical Redirection

Children are learning a lot of new things every day. They're learning to walk, run, say new words, recognize colours and letters, to know what is safe or dangerous, and how to interact with others. They have a lot to remember, and it's hard sometimes.

It can feel frustrating when your child is doing something you don't want them to, and it appears they aren't listening. But what can you do? One great strategy is redirection.

Redirection is a way to help your child learn appropriate behaviour, stay safe, encourage exploration, avoid power struggles, and promote a strong relationship with you.

Verbal redirection is redirecting a child's behaviour by telling them what not to do, immediately followed by what to do instead.

Example: "Remember we don't throw the ball in the house. Roll it on the floor please."

Talking to your child in this clear and calm manor will help them learn and remember what is expected of them. When a parent yells at their child to stop an activity or behaviour, the child is often confused of what is being asked of them. A child also can't problem solve on their own yet, so can't figure out what to replace their behaviour with.

Threats and yelling are NOT appropriate ways to use redirection.

Instead of yelling: "How many times do I have to tell you not to do that! If you don't start listening, you won't get a snack!" when your child takes a toy from their sibling,

Try something like this: "We don't grab the blocks from your bother. Let's colour over here instead."

*Remember, be clear and calm.

Physical redirection is redirecting a child's behaviour by physically removing them from one place / situation, to a more appropriate one.

This is often used when your child is in a dangerous situation and you want to redirect them to a safe activity. Remember to use gentle touch. Don't jerk their arm, hit, or pick them up violently.

Example: Your toddler is pulling at the electric cords by the TV. You hold their hand and lead them back to their toys.

Verbal and physical redirection work best when used together.

Remember to use a calm, gentle, and clear voice. Say clearly what you want your child to stop doing, and what you want them to do instead. Lead them by the hand if you need to and join with the new activity. Be patient. You and your child are still learning. You've got this!

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