

Positive Guidance

Young children are very concrete thinkers. It is much easier for young children to follow directions when they are told what to do, than when they are told what not to do.

Try to avoid negative statements. (It is easy to say "no" a hundred times a day with a two year old.) Instead, use positive "verbal guidance" when working with children. Tell children what you want them to do. Create a positive attitude in your home.

Suggestions for Verbal Guidance*

Say:

Sit down when you slide.
Dig in the sand.
Sit in the swing.
Use both hands when you climb.
Climb down the ladder.
Throw the stick over the fence.
Keep the puzzle on the table.
Turn the pages carefully.
Talk in a quiet voice.
Wipe your hands on the paper towel.
Be sure the ladder is safe.
Sit on your chair.
Move back on the rug.
Walk around the swing.
Wipe your brush on the jar.
Put on an apron.
Time to go inside.
Wash your hands.
Drink your milk.
Drink out of your own glass.

Do Not Say:

Don't stand up when you slide.
Don't throw the sand.
Don't stand in the swing.
You'll fall if you don't watch out.
Don't jump off the box.
Don't play with the stick. You might hurt someone.
Don't dump the puzzle pieces on the floor.
Don't tear the book.
Don't shout.
Don't put your hands on anything.
Be careful; You might fall.
Don't rock (stand) on your chair.
Don't lean forward so that the other children can't see.
Be careful. The swing might hit you.
Don't drip paint on the floor.
Don't you want to put an apron on?
Shall we go inside?
Don't you want to wash your hands?
Don't you want your milk?
Don't bother the other children.

*Excerpted from: Guidance of the Young Child, by Louise Langford