

Using Active Ignoring

Actively ignoring your child can be helpful as a disciplinary technique in certain circumstances. If your child is acting out to get your attention, paying attention is a reward for the undesirable behavior. You can use active ignoring in response to the following behaviors:

- Clinging
- Sassiness or being demanding
- Screaming, talking loudly, swearing
- Tantrums
- Threatening
- Arguing, whining, baby talk, or refusing to talk
- Angry mood, sulking, throwing toys or other objects (to get your attention and/or because they are angry that they were told “no”)

Effective Active Ignoring Techniques:

- ✓ Stay silent and turn your eyes away
- ✓ Keep your facial expression blank
- ✓ Do not change your body language in reaction to what the child is doing (sighing, holding your head, putting your head down, covering your ears, etc.)
- ✓ Compliment or praise others engaging in appropriate behavior
- ✓ Leave the table or area
- ✓ Praise the child when they switch to appropriate behavior

Note: Be prepared! When you actively ignore a child, their behavior will most likely get worse before it gets better. At first, children may try every bad behavior they’ve ever done in the past to get your attention because they know that at one time they got a response from you

Examples:

Shawn is 4 years old and his mother is making dinner in the kitchen. Shawn comes into the kitchen wanting juice and is whining, yelling and screaming for juice. Mom should ignore that behavior until Shawn asks for juice appropriately, that is, without screaming or whining.

Jessie wants to play video games. Mom says no and Jessie begins crying. Mom should ignore him and leave the room.

A teen wants to go to a movie and Dad says no. The teen starts swearing at Dad, goes to their room, slams the bedroom door and then starts throwing things around their bedroom. Dad should ignore these behaviors.