



Following Directions Practice

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Remind your child what it means to follow directions and why it is important. My first grader was having difficulty following directions in class, and it's amazing how far he came when I reminded him every day to "listen closely" and "watch his teacher with his eyes." Understanding the importance of following directions is the first step!

1. Ordering Objects

Materials: Red, Blue, Yellow, and Green Crayons

1. Line up the crayons on the table in front of the child.
2. Ask them to manipulate the crayons based on your directions.
 - a. For one-step directions, say simple things like "Move the blue crayon." "Touch the red crayon." or ask them to make shapes such as "Make a T using the crayons."
 - b. For two-step directions, you might say, "Move the green crayon to the front." "Move the yellow crayon to second place." "Move the crayon in first place to third place."
3. You can get as advanced as you want, saying things like "Move the green crayon to third place and the last crayon to first place."
4. Do the same with other materials such as pencil case supplies.
5. Include packing-away instructions so they learn how to do this in an organized manner, following one instruction at a time, so the routine becomes predictable.

2. Real Life Practice

Children who have difficulty following directions will often become lost during class-guided activities throughout the school day. This can be overwhelming and cause them to fall further behind. If your child has difficulty following directions in context, it is very important to make the teacher aware of this. Have the child move to the front of the classroom and ask the teacher to give them subtle reminders and extra cues about tasks throughout the day.

It is important to practice following directions in a classroom setting—role-play teacher/student with them. You can pretend to be the teacher first, and do real-life tasks that they may encounter throughout the day. You can also give the child the list of instructions, and they can pretend to be YOUR teacher. Sometimes switching roles is beneficial; it allows the child to see things from the teacher's perspective. You can even pretend to be a confused student who isn't following the directions and have them encourage and remind you. Below is a list of things that a teacher might ask of a student. Practice having them follow your directions. Once it is easy, increase your speed and move at a teacher's pace.

1. Take a pencil from your backpack and sharpen it. Then write your name at the top of the page.
2. Get a yellow, red, and blue crayon from the crayola box. Draw your favorite bug using those colors.
3. Fold your paper in half lengthwise, and then fold it in half again. Write your first and last name on the front of the folded paper.
4. Take the paper you have been working on and put it in your backpack. Then come back to your table and wait quietly. I don't want anything on your desk.
5. Number your paper 1-5. Write five words beginning with /b/. Then bring your paper to me.

You can modify or add to this list of instructions to make it more suitable for your children.

3. Worksheet Games

For following directions, I do worksheets. That is precisely what our students do throughout their day! Below, I have found some great worksheets to practice following directions.

Try not to help your students too much when they are working on these worksheets. Prompt them to read the directions, color code each step another color, pick up a finger for each step, and repeat what you said if they need help.

1. [This would be good for very young children](#)...just simple worksheets that say "circle the shortest, circle the tallest." I would cut each picture out and ask them individually so they had to listen to my direction. I would interchange using tallest, shortest, and medium sized.
2. This is [a really fun game](#) based on the process of elimination. The child has to guess the final remaining animal after all your clues. I suggest getting a bunch of pennies or plastic chips and have the children listen to your description and then cover each animal as it is eliminated.
3. [This is all about following directions based on placement and color](#) as the child colors the ice cream scoops. It's simple but a great 2-step direction worksheet.
4. And [I just included this](#) because I thought it was funny... It made me laugh. It may be a good worksheet to use with students in middle school or high school. If nothing else, it proves a point...be thorough when reading instructions!!

4. Following Directions Drill

1. Home Speech Home has hundreds of directions already written up for you.
[1 Step Directions](#)
[2 Step Directions](#)
[3 Step Directions](#)
[4 Step Directions](#)
[Conditional Directions](#)
2. Pull out your favorite board game: Chutes and Ladders, Candy Land, or you can even just do a basic bean bag toss into the ol' garbage can. Anything that will motivate your children to listen carefully to your directions. As you play your game, have the child earn their move by answering/following 3-5 of your directions. This is a fast-paced approach that allows you to cover a lot of material in a short amount of time while keeping your children motivated.

You've got this! 🙌
Start driving student success the SMARTIE Buddy way.
Questions? Contact us.