



BE HAPPY

ACTIVE IGNORING BE HAPPY PARENTING SKILL

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WHAT IS ACTIVE IGNORING?

Sometimes children do things to get attention from their caregivers, even if this attention is discipline. “Active ignoring” uses the principle of “where attention goes, behavior grows.” This means purposely not paying attention to a child’s unhelpful behaviors in order to make them go away. Active ignoring can quickly stop many types of problem behaviors, can reduce caregiver frustration, and is easy to learn.

- ✓ Ignoring the child’s unhelpful behavior removes your attention as a “reward” for acting out.
- ✓ Active Ignoring works best for behaviors that occur often and are well known problems.
- ✓ Instead, give praise and attention to a child’s behaviors we do want to see.
- ✓ When a child’s behavior causes a safety concern, you should give attention to the behavior and ignore the child.

ACTIVE IGNORING IN ACTION

- Explain to your child beforehand what Active Ignoring is and that you will be utilizing the strategy. Do not explain Active Ignoring while using the skill.
- When your child engages in an unhelpful or undesired behavior, clearly state what the desired behavior is and then ignore your child’s unhelpful behaviors by keeping a neutral face and voice, turning your body away, continuing on with another task, and overall not engaging.
 - “When you can use asking words, then I can help you get your toy.”
- Provide exaggerated and specific praise when the child switches to the appropriate behavior, even if it’s a small change!
- You can be a ‘broken record’ if you feel you need to respond - restate what the desired behavior is but keep ignoring the undesired behavior choices.



BEHAVIORS TO USE ACTIVE IGNORING WITH:	BEHAVIORS TO NOT IGNORE:
Fusinness, Complaining, Pouting, Grumpiness.	Hitting, Slapping, etc., Throwing or Breaking Things, Being Mean to People or Animals.
Talking Back, Mild Arguing, Whining.	Disobeying a Command, Doing Dangerous Things, Making Threats.
Asking the Same Question Over & Over, Repeating Things, Attention-Seeking Behavior.	Getting a Bad Grade, Forgetting to do Chores or Homework, Being Afraid or Shy.

ADDITIONAL TIPS:

- **Things are Getting Worse instead of Better:**
 - Make sure you're ignoring the behavior the whole time. If you ignore a behavior for a little while but eventually give in or get angry, you've accidentally taught your child that the only way to get your attention is to behave even worse than before. So, once you decide to ignore a behavior, stick with it.
- **Active Ignoring is Frustrating for Me:**
 - Try to stay focused on the long term goal. Remember that the more you dislike what your child is doing, the more it's worth getting rid of the behavior. As long as your child is safe, it might be helpful to leave the room.
- **My Child Screams, Cries and Gets Aggressive:**
 - Even though it's difficult, you can ignore this behavior, too. Just make sure your child isn't harming himself or others.
- **My Child is Always Angry with Me Now that I use Active Ignoring**
 - If your child is angry, it may be because you've started ignoring him or her all the time, not just when they misbehave. Remember to give your child lots of praise and attention when they are good. Ignore only the problem behaviors, not the whole child!

