

***DOES YOUR CHILD KNOW THE VOCABULARY
FOR FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS?***

Following directions can be tricky. You need to know a lot of words! Children might have trouble following directions because they don't understand the words (vocabulary). To follow directions successfully, your child must understand a lot of different concepts (concept vocabulary).

***Does your child have the words and concept vocabulary to follow directions?
Ask your self these questions:***

Does my child know colors?

Examples: red, grey, orange, pink

- Could he follow this direction? "Everybody get a red ball and stand in line."

Does my child know shapes?

Examples: circle, square, triangle, rectangle, oval, diamond

- Could he follow this direction? "Draw a square on your worksheet."

Does my child know size words?

Examples: big, tall, large, medium

- Could he follow this direction? "Circle the dog with the short tail."

Does my child know common school directions?

Examples: cross out, underline, draw a circle around, put a line through

- Could he follow this direction? "Cross out all of the words that start with b."

Does my child know time concepts?

Examples: today, yesterday, before, after, later

- Could he follow this direction? "Before you go out for recess, hand in your math."

Does my child know quantity words?

Examples: most, least, few, some, less than

- Could he follow this direction? "If you have less than 5 mistakes on your worksheet, you can have free reading time."

Does my child know sequence words?

Examples: first, second, last, next, beginning

- Could he follow this direction? "The second person in each row can hand out the workbooks."

Does my child know opposites?

Examples: hot/cold, skinny/fat, rough/smooth, wide/narrow, same/different

- Could he follow this direction? "Be sure to use different colors on your picture."

Does my child know spatial concepts?

Examples: in, on, under, beside, behind, in front of, above, below, left, right, east, west

- Could he follow this direction? "Write your name above the first question."

Does my child know emotion/feeling words?

Examples: happy, afraid, tired, disappointed

- Could he follow this direction? "Which character in the story was angry?"

***BUILDING LISTENING SKILLS
FOR FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS***

Children spend most of their time in school listening. Children who have good listening skills are more likely to succeed in school. Even at a very young age, children can learn the skills they need to be active listeners.

Here are some ways you can help your child develop his listening skills for following directions:

1. Teach your child the “Give Me 5” strategies: eyes looking, ears listening, brain thinking, mouth quiet, body still.
2. Teach your child that he is responsible for understanding what he hears. Encourage your child to ask questions or to ask people to repeat what they said, to make sure he understands.
3. Talk about directions that are too long, too quiet or too hard for him to understand. When your child knows what is wrong with a direction, he can ask for more information.
4. Teach your child to practice saying directions over and over again to himself to help him remember what he has to do.
5. Teach your child to make pictures in his mind of what he has to do.
6. Teach your child to talk to himself to help solve problems. For example, your child might ask, “What am I supposed to do?” “What are my plans?” “How is my plan working?” “How did I do?”
7. Teach your child to use his own words (paraphrase) to repeat a direction.
8. Teach your older child to jot down a few quick notes to help him remember directions.
9. Teach your older child to underline key words in written instructions.
10. Teach your older child to read directions silently to himself while the teacher reads directions out loud.