Effective Commands

Importance of Appropriate Commands

- Noncompliance with adult commands is a salient problem of children with ADHD
- Noncompliance may set off a chain of negative behaviors that are more problematic than the initial failure to comply

Characteristics of Commands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obtain attention before issuing</td>
<td>Issue before obtaining attention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue in manageable steps</td>
<td>Multiple steps in one command</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct, specific</td>
<td>Vague questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clear who should comply</td>
<td>Unclear (“Let’s…”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive phrasing (“Do”)</td>
<td>Negative phrasing (“Don’t”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Followed by consequences (+ or -)</td>
<td>Repeated without consequences</td>
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Compliance

The child exhibits within ten seconds or within a time specified by the staff member a behavior that has been specified in a command issued by a staff member, or ceases to exhibit for at least ten seconds a behavior the cessation of which has been specified in a command issued by a staff member.

Noncompliance

The child, when given a command, fails to meet the criteria for Compliance.

Repeated Noncompliance

The child, when given a repeated command, fails to meet the criteria for Compliance.

Standard Command Sequence

Issue a command

Award points for Compliance

Inform child of point loss for Noncompliance

Repeat Command

Inform child of point loss for Repeated Noncompliance

Assign Time Out
Rates of Compliance in SIP

**Commands**

- 92% compliance rate for 364 children in 10 STPs

Rates of Noncompliance

- Higher frequency when teaching procedures
- Faded over time
- Continue to use if a child does not learn procedures
- Higher frequency for very young children

Commands and Modulation
Appropriate Use of Prompts

“Red team has the ball, shooting at that basket.”

Providing information that children can act on to do the right thing.

Appropriate Use of Prompts

“Is everyone ready?” before pitching the ball

Focus children’s attention on the ongoing activity.

Appropriate Use of Prompts

“Who remembers today’s Social Skill?”

“Can anyone give me an example of progress we made during today’s game?”

Solicit information from children
Appropriate Use of Prompts
“The rules for Bathroom Breaks are:
• Flush the toilet.
• Wash and dry your hands.
• Leave the area clean and dry.
• Use your stuff the right way.
• Be responsible for your stuff.
• Tell a counselor if there is a problem.”
Remind children of behavioral expectations

Inappropriate Use of Prompts
“It’s time to get out of the pool.”
“This is not a circle.”
Using a prompt in place of a command

Inappropriate Use of Prompts
After an initial command to form a circle, repeating “Come on”, “Hurry up”
Counting down from 10
Interrupting the command sequence with prompts
Inappropriate Use of Prompts

“Remember, use your inside voice”.
“We should all have our backpacks.”
“Remember to stand behind the line when you throw the ball in.”

Using a prompt in place of a point loss

Shaping Inappropriate Behaviors

• Giving commands and awarding points for Compliance may reinforce inappropriate behavior (e.g., sitting down in games)
• Provide social reinforcement to the children who are exhibiting the correct behavior and ignore the mildly inappropriate behavior

Special Uses of Commands for High-Rate Behaviors

• Continuous behavior
  • Inform of point loss for Violating Activity Rules one time per minute
  • Issue a command one time per interval
  • Exception: potentially dangerous situation
• High-rate behavior
  • At least 5 times per minute
Bobby, stop interrupting for 2 minutes.

Child stops for 2 minutes → Award points for Compliance.

Child interrupts again within 2 minutes → Child stops for 2 minutes → Award points for Compliance.

Bobby, you lose 20 points for interruption and 20 points for repeated noncompliance. You now have a 10 minute time out.

Child interrupts at least 5 times per minute