

Effective Commands

FIU Center for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Problems

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

Effective	Ineffective
Obtain attention before issuing	Issue before obtaining attention
Issue in manageable steps	Multiple steps in one command
Direct; specific	Vague; questions
Clear who should comply	Unclear ("Let's...")
Positive phrasing ("Do")	Negative phrasing ("Don't")
Followed by consequences (+ or -)	Repeated without consequences

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.

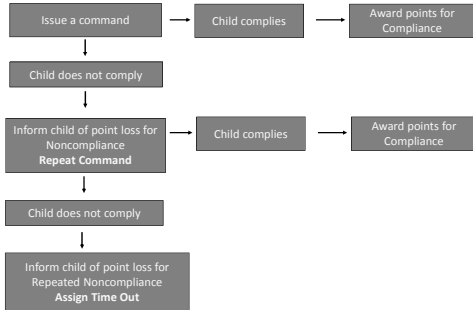
Noncompliance

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

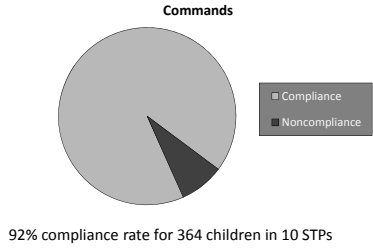
Repeated Noncompliance

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

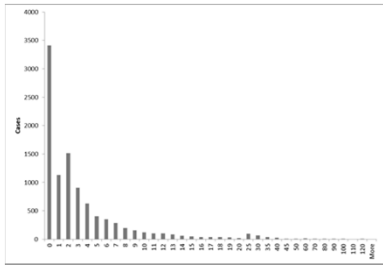
Standard Command Sequence



Rates of Compliance in STP



Rates of Noncompliance



Commands and Modulation

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

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

