



PCIT-Toddlers 8 Rules of Effective Commands* (PDI-T phase)

Adapted from Eyberg and Funderburk (2011), Eight Rules of Effective Commands, pgs 72-73

***Over-riding rule that commands are used sparingly and only when the child is emotionally able to practice listening with a maximum of three commands practiced during session and during PDI-T Home Therapy Practice.**

RULE	REASON	EXAMPLES
1. Commands should be <u>DIRECTLY</u> , rather than indirectly stated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct commands are provided in the form of a statement, rather than a question to clearly communicate that the child is independently expected to complete the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please hand me the block. • Put the train in the box please. • Sit by Mommy. Instead of: Will you hand me the block? Let's put the train in the box. Come sit by me, ok.
2. Commands should be given <u>ONE AT A TIME</u> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases the chances that the child can process and execute the provided task, particularly given toddler's developmental level. • Improves the parent's ability to determine if compliance has occurred. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please put the doll in the basket. Instead of: <i>Put the doll, play clothes and wipes up on the counter.</i> • Hold my hand. Instead of: <i>Let's go home. (gathering items & holding hands)</i>
3. Commands should be limited to <u>SIMPLE CONCEPTS & PHRASES</u> appropriate to toddler's developmental level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases the child's ability to understand the provided task. • Only the commands listed on your handout will be provided and practiced as they represent the limited, toddler-directed commands that should be provided to and expected from this age group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit by Daddy. Instead of: <i>Stop running and calm down.</i>
4. Commands should always be <u>SPECIFIC</u> , rather than stated in general terms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves children's understanding of what is expected. • Improves congruence between parent's and children's expectation for what is to be completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit by Mommy. Instead of: <i>Behave!</i> • Hold my hand. Instead of: <i>Stop touching everything!</i>

(Continues next page)



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<p>5. A <u>POSTIVE TOUCH</u> (touching the child's back) & <u>CLEAR PHYSICAL GESTURES</u> (e.g., pointing to objects) must accompany an effective command.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase toddlers' chance of compliance by gaining their attention and allowing them to use their visual skills to orient toward the desired task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent: (place hand softly on child's back and holds out opposite hand) Please hold Daddy's hand. <i>Instead of:</i> <i>Parent: (from across the room) Come hold my hand!</i>
<p>6. Commands should be provided in a <u>TYPICAL, SPEAKING TONE OF VOICE.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits the intensity of the emotional feedback the child receives prior to compliance. • Improves parent's ability to remain calm throughout the compliance sequence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent: (at eye level of child and with typical tone of voice) Please give Mommy the train. <i>Instead of:</i> <i>Parent: (from across the room) Give me the train!</i>
<p>7. <u>EXPLANATIONS</u> should remain <u>BRIEF</u> and <u>PROVIDED PRIOR</u> to the command <u>OR FOLLOWING</u> toddler <u>COMPLIANCE.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreases the chances that the child will become distracted by an explanation provided in between the command and child compliance. • Increases the likelihood of compliance by providing context to demands. • Method for teaching rationale and sequencing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent: Uh-oh, time to go home. Hold Daddy's hand please. Child: (complies) Parent: Good listening! (while providing facial expressions and enthusiastic tone of voice). <i>Instead of:</i> <i>Parent: Hold my hand. - Child: Why?</i> <i>Parent: Clean up. - Child: Me play.</i>
<p>8. Parent must be in <u>CLOSE PROXIMITY</u> to the child <u>PRIOR TO</u> issuing a <u>COMMAND.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible, parent should physically position themselves on the child's level (e.g., crouch down on the floor next to the child). • Increases likelihood child will comprehend and independently complete the task. • Increases the likelihood of child compliance by assisting in orienting the child's attention toward the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child: (running around room) Parent: (gets near child closing off their running path and down to eye level) Wow, story time! (holding out book) Please sit with Mommy. <i>Instead of:</i> <i>Parent: (chasing child around room) Sit down with me so we can read a story.</i>