Head Start center for inclusion

Challenging Behavior Tip Sheet: Following Directions

"HELP!": My child has a hard time following directions when I ask them to do something.

What you can do:

- Listen to your own instructions- make sure they are clear, specific and consistent.
- Make sure directions are positive (ie that they tell the child to do something rather than to stop doing something).
- Make sure when the child follows the instruction correctly you praise them- through encouragement or smiles.
- If your child is having a hard time following directions with more than one step (ex: Put your lunch in your backpack, get your coat on and tie your shoes), try to present only 1 step at a time, and give the next step only after they finish the first.
- Here are some examples of good directions— "When you are finished eating, put your bowl in the sink." "Wash your hands before you come to the table for dinner." "Put your pajamas on and then brush your teeth." "Climb into your car seat please."
- Make sure to praise your child for each step they complete. Use specific praise say, "I like how you _____." Kids will repeat behaviors that get attention.

This material was developed by the Head Start Center for Inclusion with federal funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Head Start (Grant No. 90YD0270). The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. You may reproduce this material for training and information purposes.

My Ideas:
