

Chores Compliance, Giving Specific Directions and Monitoring



Chore compliance refers to ways in which parents can get children to do their fair share of work around the house. This is important because it teaches them responsibility, enables them to take more pride in their home (which will result in them taking better care of it), and helps parents in some of the household upkeep. There are two important factors to keep in mind. First, we must give jobs to our children that are appropriate for their age and developmental level. Second, we need to be specific on how we want a job done and by when it should be finished.

Giving *specific directions* about expectations and chores increases parental effectiveness. Being specific can save you a lot of arguing later about whether the chore or expectation was met adequately. Being vague with threats of punishments is also less effective than explaining the consequences of non-compliance. For example: “When you finish picking up all your Lego and putting the pieces in the bin, then we will be able to go outside for our bike ride. If you choose not to put the Lego away, then we’ll not be able to go for our ride together. Do you have any questions?” Note that asking if the child has any questions helps you both be sure that the expectations are clear, both for the chore and the consequences.

Here are some common examples of instructions we may give our children that are **not** specific and well-defined:

- “Go clean your room”
- “The garage is a mess. Do something about it.”
- “Your toys are everywhere. Get them off the floor.”
- “Be sure to pack something to eat for tomorrow.”
- “Be good and behave yourself.”

How would you re-write the above statements in order to make them more specific to what you want to have happen?

Monitoring allows parents to check on how well a job was done. Kids tend to be more responsible when they know a parent will be checking their work. You might say to your child something like, “Now that we’re clear about what needs to be done, go ahead and work on it and when you think you’re finished, come and get me and I’ll check it over with you.” This may

apply to many things that children take responsibility for, such as their homework, music lesson tasks, or household chores.