



STEPS TO MAKING CLEAR REQUESTS:



A “HOW TO DO IT” GUIDE TO PREVENTION

This section is the “**how to**” guide for what is probably the **single most important teaching tool** you can use as a parent. This is true for the parents of kids in general, and especially true for the parents of kids with ADD/ADHD.

The table below lists the steps in making *Clear Requests*. Each step in the process is briefly explained on the next several pages. Once you have read these pages, **please practice** the steps repeatedly with another adult before you try using them with your kids. Being really good at making *Clear Requests* is essential – as the old saying goes, if you can’t do this, everything else in this chapter will be like “re-arranging deck chairs on the Titanic.” The other steps won’t matter and they probably won’t work. So **PLEASE PRACTICE!**

Making Clear Requests: 8 Steps to Success

1. Make Eye Contact.
 2. Keep Your Voice Calm.
 3. Be Specific; Avoid Questions; Don’t Be Passive
(Eliminate Wiggle Room!)
 4. Use “Do It” Instead of “Stop It” Requests.
 5. Give Only One Direction at a Time.
 6. Encourage a Job Well Done – REWARD!
 7. Avoid Negative Trailers!
 8. Wait 10 Seconds.
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Making Clear Requests: 8 Steps to Success Explained

The following pages explain each step involved in making *Clear Requests*. Please read each step, then think about ways to use each step with your child. Remember, *practicing is really important!*

1. **Make Eye Contact:** We spend a lot of time talking to the tops, sides and backs of kids' heads. If *we don't have their eyes*, we probably *don't have their attention*. If we don't have their attention, then they may be *MISSING IMPORTANT THINGS!* Consider having the following family rule: Any time you talk to someone, make sure you are both in the same room!



2. **Keep Your Voice Calm:** Kids will match our tone! If we use an angry tone, they will most likely become angry too – and this is really true for kids who have trouble with *SHOOTING FROM THE HIP and PUTTING ON THE BRAKES*. Angry and frustrated tones simply make things harder than they have to be.



3. **Be Specific; Avoid Questions; Don't Be Passive:** (Eliminate Wiggle Room!) This is one of the hardest steps for parents. Remember, if you are not clear and specific, your child may choose to misunderstand or *may truly not understand* what you want. Be polite, not

passive. Only ask questions if you need information or if you are willing to live with all possible answers.



4. *Use "Do It" Instead of "Stop It" Requests:* This means you should tell the child what to do. Many of the commands we give kids are "Stop it" or "Knock it off" commands, such as "Stop yelling at me!" That only tells kids WHAT NOT TO DO. "Do it" commands such as "Talk to me in a polite voice" tells kids WHAT TO DO.



5. *Give Only One Direction at a Time:* Only give two-part commands if you're sure your kid can handle them. Remember, kids with ADHD often get distracted and will drift off in the middle of jobs that have several unrelated parts.



6. *Encourage a Job Well Done - REWARD!* Often the best reward is simple praise. Remember to make eye contact when you praise – we need to get our kids' attention when we are praising them, just like we need to get their attention when we tell them to do things. So don't forget to maintain eye contact!

☺ Remember – we need to praise more often than discipline! ☺

7. **Avoid Negative Trailers!** This is an example of a negative trailer: “Good job making your bed! Now why can’t you do that all the time? We wouldn’t have these problems if you would just do this all the time, #@&*\$!” Would you feel praised or punished if this was said to you? If you are adding negative trailers, your stress level is probably too high. Please see Chapter 5, “What to Do When the Kids Are Driving You Nuts,” for some helpful hints on managing stress.



8. **Wait 10 Seconds:** Let’s give our kids a chance to obey! Average kids need at least 5 seconds to stop what they are doing and begin doing what we tell them to do. If we go too fast, our kids with ADHD are most certainly going to *SHOOT FROM THE HIP* and have trouble with *PUTTING ON THE BRAKES!*



★ Using the eight steps to making *Clear Requests* should decrease the overall stress level in your family, increase the number of times things go well in your family, and really help elevate your kid’s self-esteem. Dr. Al works on this set of skills every day in his personal *and* professional life. It’s truly worth the effort!