



# "Instead of..." Tips

## For Kids Who Have Experienced Trauma



- **Instead of a lecture**, use simple language (about 8 to 12 words).
- **Instead of waiting** for behavior to intensify, respond quickly.
- **Instead of giving orders**, offer simple choices.
- **Instead of just correcting**, give immediate retraining and a "re-do."
- **Instead of expecting** a child to know, clarify expectations.
- **Instead of isolating** when a child is dysregulated, keep the child near you.
- **Instead of only noticing the "bad" behaviors**, offer praise for success.
- **Instead of taking it personally**, remember there is a need behind the behavior.

### Use simple words

Choose and use your words carefully. Aim them at the behavior, not the child. Try instructions like these:

- "Walk, don't run."
- "We don't hit."
- "Use your words."
- "Try that again."



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Scan code or visit:  
[thewholehouse.org](http://thewholehouse.org)  
[shieldwv.com](http://shieldwv.com)

When we look at behaviors as needs, we are less likely to take them personally.

# The IDEAL Approach

Created by Dr. Karyn Purvis



**I** Respond **immediately**, within three seconds of misbehavior.

**D** Respond **directly** to the child by making eye contact. Get down on their level.

**E** The response should be **efficient** and measured. Use as few words as possible.

**A** The response should be **action-based**. Lead the child through a re-do.

**L** Your response should be **leveled at the behavior**, not the child.

## Try a re-do

Let's try that again. "A re-do 'erases' the muscle memory of the failed behavior and gives the child the physical and emotional experience of substituting a successful one in its place."

- *The Connected Child*



## Give choices

- Do you want to sit here or stand with me?
- Do you need to go now or can you wait 5 minutes?
- Would you like this snack or this one?
- Would you like to do the motions to the song or sit this one out?

When we remind ourselves that the child can't regulate — not won't regulate — we can set our personal feelings aside.