

Connected Families: Removing Attention to Change Your Child's Behavior

Young children sometimes engage in tantrums, whining, or other behaviors you might feel you have to correct in the moment. The combination of (1) giving your child lots of attention for positive behavior, and affection throughout the day, and (2) removing attention from specific unwanted behavior is powerful! Using this approach will help your child learn what behaviors you want to see.

Choosing the Behavior to Remove Attention for:

Pick 1 or 2 specific behaviors you want to decrease.



Behaviors that respond well to removing attention include:

- Whining
- Tantrums
- Yelling
- Protesting
- Arguing



Do NOT ignore these behaviors:

- Destructive or unsafe behaviors, such as hitting.
- Children refusing to follow your directions.

Steps to Removing Attention for a Behavior

1 Look away and avoid eye contact with your child.

2 Avoid saying anything to your child.

3 Avoid touching your child.

4 Stay close by so you know your child is safe.

5 Ignore each instance of the unwanted behavior.

6 As soon as your child stops the behavior, give your attention to a positive behavior.

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Tips for Removing Attention for a Behavior

Start using this approach when you can be consistent. It's best not to start when your routine is disrupted, like when you have family visiting.



Remember that behaviors like whining, are age-appropriate for young children.

Stay calm. Take slow, deep breaths, or say something that is encouraging to yourself like, "This will get better. I'm helping my child learn that this behavior is not okay."

Try and try again. Your child may whine, scream, or tantrum louder or longer at first!

Don't Give up! Eventually, your child will learn those behaviors won't get your attention and they will happen less often.

