



Steps for Active Ignoring

- 1 Be sure about what you want the child to do that would replace the unwanted behaviour.
- 2 Ignore the behaviour for as long as it lasts unless it gets dangerous.
- 3 Do not mention the behaviour directly (e.g. by telling the child you are going to ignore what they are doing, or by asking the child to stop) or indirectly (e.g. by mimicking or criticising).
- 4 As soon as the unwanted behaviour stops, praise the child – not for stopping what they were doing, but for starting to do what you like (and look out for other opportunities to praise the behaviour you like, too).
- 5 Ignore the behaviour, not the child as a person. If the behaviour gets worse, it is probably because the child is being ignored altogether, rather than being paid (positive) attention for something other than the unwanted behaviour.
- 6 Think about asking others in the family (e.g. partner, older children) to ignore the behaviour, but without any ganging up or siding with one child against another.
- 7 Think about the reasons behind the behaviour, and what feelings in the child may be triggering it (e.g. upset, frustrated, hungry); if possible address the problem without drawing attention to the behaviour that has made you aware of it.
- 8 Ask yourself what feelings this annoying behaviour may trigger in yourself, and how you could deal with/recover from/let go of them.