





# **ESTABLISHING INSTRUCTIONAL CONTROL AT HOME: YOUR STEP-BY- STEP GUIDE**

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Welcome! This guide is designed to help you establish instructional control with your child in a way that feels manageable and supportive. Instructional control means building a relationship where your child listens to and follows your directions because they trust and understand that good things happen when they do. It's about creating a positive, cooperative environment at home.

This workbook is meant to be interactive—take your time, reflect on your progress, and fill in the sections as you go!



## Step 1: Understanding Instructional Control

Before we jump into strategies, let's make sure we're on the same page.

### What is instructional control?

Instructional control means that your child follows directions because they trust that doing so leads to positive outcomes. It's not about being strict or forceful—it's about creating a consistent, positive relationship where your child is motivated to cooperate.

Take a moment to reflect:

- What does instructional control currently look like at home for you and your child?
- *Fill in the blank:*
  - When I give my child an instruction, they tend to respond by:
  - Right now, I feel like my relationship with my child's cooperation is: (circle one)
    - Consistent
    - Sometimes cooperative
    - Unpredictable
    - Challenging

## Step 2: Setting Up for Success

Before diving into strategies, it's important to have the right mindset and tools in place.

### 1. Build a Positive Relationship:

Your child is more likely to follow directions if they enjoy spending time with you and feel safe and secure. Focus on creating positive interactions throughout the day.

#### Action Plan:

- How can you make more time for fun, positive activities with your child?
- *Fill in the blank:*
  - We enjoy doing \_\_\_\_\_ together.
  - I will set aside \_\_\_\_\_ minutes each day to engage in this positive activity.

### 2. Consistency Is Key:

Children with autism thrive on predictability. Make sure you're giving clear, consistent instructions every time.

### Reflect:

- What routines can you create to make following directions more predictable?
- *Fill in the blank:*
  - One routine I can introduce or improve is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - I will consistently give directions during \_\_\_\_\_ part of our day.

## Step 3: The Power of Positive Reinforcement

Reinforcement is your best friend when it comes to instructional control. It's about rewarding your child for following directions, so they're motivated to listen again in the future.

### 1. Find What Motivates Your Child:

Every child is different. For some, it's praise and high-fives, for others, it's a favorite snack or toy.

### Fill In:

- My child loves \_\_\_\_\_.
- When my child follows an instruction, I will reward them with \_\_\_\_\_.

### 2. Use Reinforcement Wisely:

The goal is to gradually increase the number of instructions your child follows, rewarding them frequently at first and then slowly reducing the need for rewards as they become more compliant.

### Action Plan:

- I will start by rewarding my child every time they \_\_\_\_\_.
- Once my child consistently follows that instruction, I will reduce rewards to every \_\_\_\_\_ time.

## Step 4: Clear Instructions and Follow-Through

It's important that your instructions are clear, simple, and direct. Avoid giving too many instructions at once, and always follow through to build consistency.

### Practice:

- Write down one simple instruction you want to start with:
  - The instruction I will give is: "\_\_\_\_\_."
- How will you ensure your instruction is clear? (E.g., using fewer words, making eye contact, getting at their level ex: kneeling or sitting on the floor next to or in front of them.)
  - To make my instruction clearer, I will \_\_\_\_\_.

## Step 5: Managing Non-Compliance

It's normal for kids to resist instructions sometimes. The key is to stay calm, avoid power struggles, and gently guide them back to following your direction.

### Fill In:

- When my child doesn't follow a direction, I will (circle one):
  - Remain calm and give them a gentle reminder
  - Use positive reinforcement for any small steps they take
  - Provide clear choices (e.g., "You can put your shoes on, or I can help you")

### My Plan:

- If my child resists an instruction, I will \_\_\_\_\_ to help them get back on track.

## Step 6: Track Your Progress

Consistency and patience are key. Take some time to track how things are going and adjust your approach as needed.

### Daily Reflection:

- Today, my child followed \_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_ instructions.
- What worked well today?
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- What could I do differently tomorrow?
  - \_\_\_\_\_

### Weekly Review:

- This week, my child made progress in \_\_\_\_\_.
- One thing that's getting easier is \_\_\_\_\_.
- I'll keep working on \_\_\_\_\_ next week.

**Final Thoughts:** Establishing instructional control is a process, and progress may come in small steps. The key is consistency, patience, and celebrating every win along the way. You're creating a positive, trusting relationship with your child that will make it easier for them to follow directions and navigate their world with confidence.

This workbook can be downloaded, printed, or filled digitally to track your progress! You're doing amazing work, and every step counts. Keep it up!