

Strategies to use when your child refuses to work

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Choices: Give your child 2-3 choices of what they would like to complete first.

- Parents, you are in control of the choices, so give your child two options that you would be okay with. If you offer it and they choose it then you have to follow through!
- *Correct example:* “We can do reading or math worksheet first, your choice “
- *Incorrect example:* “What do you want to do first, watch tv or math worksheet?”

Preference Assessment: is a fancy word for the steps to identify your child’s favorite item. This information is needed to effectively use the other strategies below. It is important to conduct a preference assessment as guessing your child’s favorite item is not 100% accurate. Preferred items are different for each child. They could be snacks, toys, break time, 1:1 attention with parents/siblings or alone time!

There are multiple ways to determine your child’s preferred item:

1. If your child can respond vocally
 - a. Ask your child, “What do you want to work for?”
2. If selecting choices is challenging for your child:
 - a. Offer 3-5 toys/snacks and see which one your child picks first. This means it’s their favorite in that moment!

*Important- conduct preference assessments multiple times throughout a work sessions as a child’s preference is always changing.

First-then: is a statement that starts with harder task followed by an easier preferred task. This statement is helpful when your child refuses to complete work!

- Conduct a preference assessment to see what could motivate your child
- State- “First work, then (preferred item)”
- *Correct example-* “First we will do the math worksheet and then you can play with your firetrucks!”
- *Incorrect example-* “You have to do your math homework otherwise no fire trucks!”

*Important- once your child completes their work, immediately deliver the item/activity they were working for! This will reinforce your child’s compliance. Reinforcement of preferred items need to occur directly after the designated work is completed otherwise first-then statements will not be an effective strategy.

Behavioral Momentum: Another technical term that means starting with 2-3 easy tasks and then presenting the hardest activity.

- Start your child’s work sessions with 2-3 easy instructions.
- Examples of easy activities:
 - “Give me a high five!”
 - “Say ahh”
 - “Touch your nose”
 - “Draw a circle”
- It’s important to praise your child after each easy instruction they comply with!
- Once 2-3 easy activities are completed give instructions for targeted task.
 - “Alright let’s complete problem #1!”

Reinforcement/Praise: When reinforcement is delivered it increases the likelihood of that behavior happening in the future. During work times we want to reinforce any appropriate behaviors. These behaviors could be the child transitioning to the work table, sitting in their chair, completing work, writing their name on their worksheet etc.

- Reinforcement is different for each individual
 - Attention such as praise can be reinforcing but also music, snacks, toys, alone time can all be preferred as well
- Conduct preference assessments to see which type of reinforcement is highest!
- Deliver praise as often as you like, just try to switch up your statements!
- Praise statements should include what your child is doing well.
- If your child uses a token board deliver praise and tokens at same time.
- **Correct example-** great job writing your name, your addition has been correct everytime, fantastic reading, way to keep your hands to yourself!
- **Incorrect-** great job, good job, great job, way to not hit your sister.

Steps for using all the strategies together:

1. Using a visual schedule, indicate that it's time to work.
2. Ask your child, "What work do you want to complete first?" (Choices)
3. Ask your child "What do you want to work for?" (Preference assessment).
4. State, "First (work), then (preferred item from preference assessment)". (First-then)
5. Start work session with 2-3 easy tasks. (behavioral momentum)
6. Deliver praise throughout work time!
7. Once work is completed deliver preferred item/activity. (Reinforcement)

**Please reach out to your BCBA's for any clarifying questions or materials needed for the implementation of strategies.