

# HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK

1. **Gather enough information to provide valid feedback.** Observe, ask questions, or both.
2. **Ask the recipient to reflect on his or her performance.** This can be general (e.g., “How do you feel that home visit went?”) or specific (e.g., “How do you think you did with joint problem solving with the parent on that home visit?”).
3. **Begin your feedback with positives.** Remember that you are giving *the gift of feedback*.
4. **Make short, clear statements about things that could have been done differently.** Leave an opening for the recipient to provide more information, to explain what was done, or to ask you questions about your statement. Don't beat around the bush, but phrase the statement in a conditional or inquisitive way: Instead of “You should have asked more questions before giving advice,” say, “You could have asked more questions before giving advice” or, “Could you have asked more questions....?”
5. **Match the amount of feedback you give to the frequency of your opportunities to give feedback, give plenty of feedback and offer to put it in writing.** If you give feedback once a week, for example, you might pick one behavior class (i.e., pattern of behavior) to focus about which to give feedback. If you give feedback once a year, on the other hand, you should pick all behavior classes.
6. **If the recipient doesn't agree with your feedback, affirm his or her response and explain, if necessary, why you still think your feedback is valid.** You might need to clarify your initial statement (i.e., the short, clear statement you gave).
7. **Let the recipient have the last word.** Getting into an argument about what you did or didn't see isn't productive. You can tell yourself that you've given the feedback and now it's up to the recipient to decide whether to accept it or not. You can exit the discussion on this particular issue by saying, “I'll watch for it more carefully next time.”
8. **If appropriate, ask the recipient to consider the next steps—what to work on.** Make this a joint decision (i.e., give feedback about the recipient's idea and give input).
9. **End with genuinely positive statements.**

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