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ESCAPE BLOCKING

Why should we do it?

It is critical that your child take your directions seriously. If your child does not follow your directions, he/she is getting TWO payoffs:

1. Avoids the demand (escape/negative reinforcement)
2. Engages in an activity that is more fun than following your direction (positive reinforcement)

If your child does not follow your direction, you must block him/her from accessing anything that is more fun.

METHOD:

1. **Give direction.** You may (you don't have to) use the 'first...then' format: "first put the bowl on the table, then you may have chips"
2. **If your child does not follow the direction, reduce the effort by putting the stimulus closer to the child. Do NOT do 'hand over hand' at this point.**
3. **If your child is refusing (e.g. plopped to the ground), implement ESCAPE BLOCKING. Do not allow escape!**
4. **The direction stays. Block your child from accessing objects, music, TV, computer, anything he/she may want to engage with.**
5. **Monitor your child with NO TALKING, NO EYE CONTACT. The only communication should be a gesture to the relevant stimulus, or repeat the 'first...then' direction.**
6. **When your child follows the direction (does not have to be perfect), give the positive outcome immediately.**
7. **If you run out of time, you may have to do hand over hand. If so, omit reward or give minimal reward (e.g. fewer chips in the bowl).**