

Examples

Julie currently displays problem behavior (refusal to comply with instruction, throwing her materials on the floor, etc.) when her teacher asks her to clean up her desk and put away materials at the end of each day. By observing Julie throughout her day and talking briefly with her parents and some of her other teachers, Julie's teacher was able to create a list of 14 simple, brief instructions that Julie was able to complete successfully when asked, and without resistance or problem behavior. Examples of the instructions included "get out your pencil", "give this book to Samantha", and "erase the blackboard". Julie's teacher checked each of the 14 instructions over the next three days to make sure she would respond successfully. Julie's teacher discovered that, upon delivery of three of the requests, Julie either refused to comply or complained in response. Julie's teacher removed the three instructions from the list, leaving a total of 11. The next day, just before it was time to ask the students to clean up their desks and put their classroom materials away, Julie's teacher delivered four instructions to Julie from the list. As Julie successfully completed each one, Julie's teacher delivered verbal praise. She was careful to deliver these easy instructions shortly after one another, but in a way so that it did not seem like a drill sergeant firing instructions at her. She was also careful to deliver the instructions quietly so that it did not call unnecessary attention to Julie. After the fourth instruction, Julie's teacher asked her to clean up her desk. Each day, her teacher used a different sequence of instructions in a different order prior to asking her to clean up her desk. After using the procedure each day over the following three weeks, Julie's teacher found that Julie was more likely to clean up her desk when asked and less likely to engage in problem behaviors as a result. Julie's teacher rewarded Julie each time she cleaned up her desk when asked without any problem behaviors with preferred items such as a sticker or a token toward extra computer time. By the third week she was able to begin gradually reducing the amount of easy requests by subtracting one easy instruction per week from the sequence until Julie could follow the instruction "clean up your desk" without any other instructions before it.