

# Essential Eight Skills: Accepting 'no'

## *Why is accepting 'no' important?*

We all have wants and needs which we would like to be met. It would be great if we could have these met instantly at all times, but as we grow, we have to learn to accept requests being denied at times. Sometimes this is for our wellbeing or safety.

The word 'no' can be confusing for young people so often it is about finding other ways to help them understand. This is in order to avoid them becoming distressed when not getting what they want. Telling someone they cannot do or have something is not easy, but communicating the reasoning for saying 'no' is important.

## *What does it look like in daily life?*

- Being told they cannot have chocolate at inappropriate times
- Being told they cannot play video games after a certain time
- Being told they cannot stay up late
- Being told they cannot stay at home on a school day
- Being told they cannot watch TV at dinner time



### Essential Eight Skills:

1. Making a request
2. Waiting
3. Accepting removals/transitions/sharing/turn taking
4. Completing tasks when requested
5. Accepting 'no'
6. Following directions related to health & safety
7. Completing daily living skills related to health & safety
8. Tolerating situations related to health & safety

Armstrong, H., Denne, L. D., & Bailey, T. (2021). The role of key skills as a risk marker for the development of challenging behaviour in children and young people who have an intellectual disability. *International Journal of Positive Behavioural Support*, 11(2), 3-14.

## How to learn and practise

- Show the child using words or pictures when they can have the items they want. This might be on a time line or calendar. This will reduce frustration and shows the child that you have listened and acknowledged their need. They are then less likely to keep asking for something, if they know they will get it.
- Show your child what they CAN have, rather than what they cannot. Use pictures or symbols to show them what is on offer that day. Take away items or pictures that you do not want them to have. As time passes you can start adding the item you do not want them to have, but put a line through the picture to indicate this.

## How to support learning

- Try to only use 'no' or 'stop' for important reasons (e.g. to keep them safe). Use other words like 'finished', 'gone' and 'all done'
- Keep language simple
- Use key phrases highlighting the message of 'no'
- Use lots of praise so they associate the skill with positivity, e.g. 'well done' or 'good listening'
- Gradually increase the difficulty of the tasks, e.g. start by saying 'no' to things they can tolerate not getting, before building up to things they are less tolerant of accepting this with.

Please visit our website for videos explaining in more detail how to practise these and other essential skills

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