



ABOUT PRACTICEWISE

At PracticeWise, we believe better outcomes for youth and families start with better use of information.

Founded to improve how evidence is used in real-world clinical care, PracticeWise equips providers, supervisors, and systems with the tools, training, and insights they need to make more informed decisions and deliver meaningful support. Our resources are built on the most common components of evidence-based practices, helping professionals respond flexibly and effectively to the needs of each child and family.

We make science practical—translating research into useful, actionable tools that fit into everyday workflows. From point-of-care guidance to easy-to-use dashboards, our approach supports clinical decision-making, tracks progress, and enhances the quality of care

This sample Practice Guide—Commands / Effective Instructions—offers a glimpse into how we help providers apply research in direct service. It's one of many tools designed to improve engagement, support goal attainment, and strengthen outcomes. Register your free account and find all our resources at [practicewise.com](https://www.practicewise.com).

COMMANDS OR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Use this guide to increase child's compliance with caregiver instructions.

Objectives

- to provide the caregiver with strategies to clearly and consistently communicate instructions to the child
- to provide the caregiver with strategies to demonstrate to the child that caregiver will see the task through to its completion
- to minimize discord between the child and caregiver regarding directives

Steps

<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide rationale	Increasing a child's compliance with instructions involves managing what happens before the command (antecedents), addressing the form and content of commands, and managing what happens after the command (consequences).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set the stage for success	<p>Instruct the caregiver to optimize the likelihood of compliance by managing certain setting events, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimizing distractions (e.g., turning off television), • getting the child's attention by saying the child's name, making eye contact, and standing near the child, and • providing a transition warning when appropriate (e.g., "In two minutes it will be time to put the toys away").
<input type="checkbox"/>	Example: Tone of voice	Instruct the caregiver to use a firm, but calm, tone of voice. A critical tone or one that conveys frustration may increase the likelihood of noncompliance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Example: One at a time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruct the caregiver to provide commands one at a time. • This helps increase compliance by minimizing the number of things the child has to remember to do and by providing caregiver with opportunities to praise compliance after each task is successfully completed. • Example: "Brush your teeth." [Wait for compliance.] "I like how you brushed your teeth when I asked. Now wash your face."
<input type="checkbox"/>	Example: Simple is better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide simple, clear instructions (e.g., "Put on your coat."). • Avoid vague requests (e.g., "Get ready to go."), or general criticisms (e.g., "We're leaving soon and you are not ready!").
<input type="checkbox"/>	Example: Tell, don't ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruct the caregiver to provide commands in statement form ("Put away your toy truck") • Avoid question form (e.g., "Would you put away your truck?" "Would you do me a favor and put away your truck?") • Avoid using the word "Let's" if the caregiver does not intend to participate (e.g., "Let's put away the toys now.")
<input type="checkbox"/>	Example: Tell child what to do	The caregiver should instruct the child about what to do (e.g., "Walk in the hallway"), rather than what to stop doing ("Don't run!"). Telling the child what to do is more positive and informative than telling the child to stop doing something.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Example: Avoid explanations	The caregiver should state the command quickly and avoid lengthy explanations about why the child must comply. Explanations provide the opportunity for the child to try to negotiate or escape the instruction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Example: State the consequences of compliance and noncompliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When applicable, the caregiver should use “If-Then” statements to inform the child what will happen if the child complies or does not comply with the caregiver’s instruction. • Example: “If you put on your shoes, then you can go outside. If you do not put on your shoes, then you must stay inside.”
<input type="checkbox"/>	Follow up: Provide time for compliance	The caregiver should know to provide ample time for the child to comply with an instruction. Avoid repeating the instruction quickly if the child has not complied.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Follow up: Mean what you say	Explain that it is necessary to see commands through to their completion to teach the child that the caregiver means what he/she says. It is better to not give a command rather than to give a command and not back up compliance or noncompliance with appropriate consequences.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Follow up: Provide appropriate consequences for compliance	Caregivers should provide praise consistently when the child begins to comply with instruction, as well as while and after the child completes task. When applicable, the caregiver should provide stated reward for compliance (e.g., the child is permitted to go outdoors after she puts on her shoes).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Follow up: Provide appropriate consequences for noncompliance	Instruct the caregiver to follow through with the stated consequence regarding noncompliance.

Helpful Tips

- Remember to praise often
- Remember to review often, by **asking questions**
- Remember to use examples to explain concepts
- Remember to practice often and provide corrective feedback to the caregiver
- Brief any other caregivers, teachers, or other adult figures who may be involved
- Simplify these steps if you have to
- This material can be covered in more than one session/meeting

Explore More PracticeWise Resources

WHO WE SERVE

PracticeWise resources are for providers and organizations that serve youth and families facing behavioral health challenges.

USERS INCLUDE:

- Marriage and Family Therapists
- Professional Counselors
- Social Workers
- Psychologists
- Psychiatric Care Providers
- Students and Educators
- Parents and Caregivers

SECTORS INCLUDE:

- Behavioral Health Organizations
- Mental Health Treatment Centers
- Hospitals and Clinics
- Private Practice
- Government
- Military Support Systems
- Child Welfare
- Public and Private School Systems
- Higher Education

RESOURCES AND SERVICES

- Managing and Adapting Practice (MAP)
 - Primary tools
 - PracticeWise Evidence-Based Services (PWEBS) Database
 - Practitioner Guides
 - Clinical Dashboards
- MATCH-ADTC
- Training and Consultation
- Professional Development
- Implementation Planning and Support
- Books and Guides



OVERVIEW

PracticeWise information resources are designed to improve the quality, efficiency, and outcomes of children's mental health services by giving clinicians easy access to the most current scientific information and by providing user-friendly measurement information resources and clinical protocols. Using an online database, the system can suggest formal evidence-based programs or, alternatively, can provide detailed recommendations about discrete components of evidence-based treatments relevant to a specific youth's characteristics. Whether services are delivered through existing evidence-based programs or assembled from components, the Managing and Adapting Practice (MAP) system also adds a unifying evaluation framework that tracks outcomes and practices on a graphical clinical dashboard.

PRIMARY TOOLS



PWEBS Database



Practitioner Guides



Clinical Dashboards

BENEFITS

Improve the effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and outcomes of behavioral healthcare.

- Enhance communication, monitoring, and focus within interdisciplinary care teams
- Provide your workforce with successful, well-tested professional development curricula and resources
- Reduce the overall, long-term expenses related to staff training and retention
- Increase the use of evidence-informed practices, tools, and resources
- Guide activity for various levels of care settings

