



Teaching children how to follow directions can be a frustrating endeavor. One reason is that we rarely break directions into a simple step-by-step process. Often, we rattle off directions to our children and expect them to immediately get with the program.

In education, teachers are taught how to scaffold lessons to ensure student success. Scaffolding is a process where teachers break down information into digestible chunks. They model how to think about information, or they demonstrate how to solve a problem. Then, teachers support students through the process. Teachers are available to reteach parts of the lesson as needed, positive correction is provided and questions are encouraged. As students demonstrate mastery, the teacher pulls back accordingly and the students become independent problem-solvers of similar problems.

Scaffolding in Parenting

If you've ever helped your kid with a science project, you have an idea of what scaffolding is NOT! Your child may have received science fair instructions in the form of a six-inch thick packet or directed to a website navigable only by a Ph.D. YOU probably did the project.

You probably gave up your last weekend of Winter Break for this stress and mess and are now an authority on how glycerin affects bubble size. Most likely, your child still does not know what a bubble solution is and could not do a science fair project to save her life.

As parents, we are our children's first and foremost teachers. When you tell your children, "Clean your rooms," and they look at you like you just handed them a science fair packet the day before Winter Break, it means you need to scaffold! Scaffolding our instructions ensures our children's success and contributes to the harmony of our homes.

The Conscious Discipline® acronym M.A.P. is designed to help parents scaffold information in order to teach their children how to follow directions with success!

Here's how it works:

M stands for MODEL

Modeling means you demonstrate WHAT TO DO and HOW TO DO it. A helpful Scaffolding Technique to support modeling is called "Think Aloud." You literally think OUT LOUD, modeling how to think about, handle or problem-solve a process or situation.

Say you happen to have a captive audience in your messy kitchen. Take that as an opportunity to Think Aloud! You may say, "Hmm... I have dirty dishes on the table and dirty dishes in the sink. How can I handle this? Where can I begin? I know! First, I'm going to rinse the dirty dishes that are in the sink and put them in the dishwasher. Next, I'm going to clear the table. Then, I'm going to rinse those dirty dishes and finish by putting them into the dishwasher."

A stands for ADD PICTURES

As Stephen Covey often said, "Begin with the end in mind." Show your children a picture of what their rooms look like when YOU consider it clean. A helpful Scaffolding Technique to support Adding Pictures is to always show your children the outcome or product before they do it.

You could say, "When your room matches this picture, then you will know you are done." Pictures of the concrete process, or a Graphic Organizer, are an additional resource for

younger children or children with extra or different needs. List the steps and add a visual cue per step. Use clip art or pictures. Post the visual aid at your child's eye level to ensure it is "readable" to your child so they don't feel embarrassed or controlled. Older children who need additional support often prefer a checklist. There are a number of apps designed for this purpose, or you can make a good ole' fashioned checklist and teach your child to check off as each task as it is done!

P stands for PRACTICE

Let's get this out of the way: Practice does NOT make perfect, but consistent practice sure does make progress! Guide your child through each step of the modeled process with a picture posted nearby of the finished product or a "readable" step by step guide. Make it "readable" by adding pictures and posting it at your child's eye-level.

For younger children use transition and sequencing words like, "FIRST, you put your dirty clothes in the hamper. What does your picture schedule say is NEXT?" Or, "You put your stuffed animals on your bed. What did you do BEFORE that?" Referring to the picture schedule when you ask these questions teaches your child that the picture schedule is a helpful resource.

For older children, ask specific, guiding and open-ended questions and PAUSE! Open-ended questions cannot be answered with a yes or no and steer clear of asking, "Why?" Pausing allows the child to reflect, think and problem-solve, all of which exercise Executive Functioning Skills! Helpful open-ended questions may sound like, "It looks like you are in the middle of sorting through those Pokémon cards. What do you think is the best way to store your cards?" Or, "I notice you have a couple of extra volleyball practices this week. What is your plan for having a clean uniform for each practice?"

Remember to Differentiate

Every good teacher knows we must differentiate instruction to provide the most effective learning experiences possible. Our children may learn at varied paces, require more or less support and require information be taught in different ways. Differentiating our instruction as parents means we deliver our lessons, even on how to clean up a room, in a way that will reach our children. It may take a few shots, especially if we have a pattern resistant child... the ones we say march to their own beat!

No matter who your child is, it is your job to try and be consistent, structured and encouraging. Mistakes will happen. Use each one as an opportunity to learn. Most of all, have FUN because some day your children will be living in their own clean homes and you may find yourself longing for a little mess.

Learn more about the M.A.P. process in our free webinar “[Three Vital Steps to Successful Routines.](#)”

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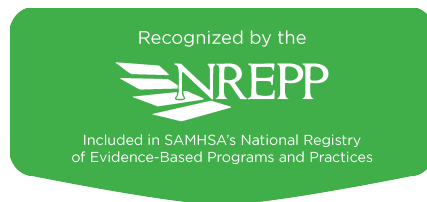
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Fran Rubio-Katz is a passionate mother and the founder of The Learning Loft, a holistic tutoring center that utilizes Conscious Discipline. She is a dedicated professional educator, with over twenty-years experience. She has been practicing Conscious Discipline since 2005 and has been an active Conscious Discipline Certified Instructor since 2010. She is known to her students as Ms. Franny and to many parents and teachers as “Franny911”.

She is also the owner and operator of Franny911 - Proudly Representing Conscious Discipline.

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