



# First & Then

## What is a First-Then Language?

First-then language allows your child to hear the expectation in a sequenced way. The child learns that a non-preferred task is immediately followed by a preferred activity (reward). Stating the instructions this way motivates your child to complete the task because they hear that it is immediately followed with a reinforcer (reward).

**First = Task**  
**Then = Reward**

### How to Use First-Then Language

1. Identify your child's preferred activities/items (rewards)
2. Ask your child what they want to work towards (reward)
3. Allow your **child** to choose reward if the reward is available
4. Clearly state, using minimal language, the expectation using the first-then language. E.g. "First brush teeth, then iPad"
5. Once the child completes the first task, provide praise and **immediately give the child their chosen reward** (e.g. iPad)

### Tips for Choosing Rewards

- Give the child choice in the reward **each time** the first-then language is presented
- Show the available choices visually by holding up the items or pictures representing the items
- Only provide choices that are **available** to the child
- Constantly monitor items to ensure they are still motivating to your child
- Rotate rewards to avoid the child getting bored with the reward

### When to Use

During any expectation that is non-preferred to your child or one that your child does not consistently do!

### Show it Visually

Use what you have around the house to visually cue your child... draw it on a piece of paper!



