



Challenging Behavior Tip Sheet: Cleaning up Toys

"HELP!": My child won't clean up when I ask her to.

What you can do:

- Make sure to give your child a warning ahead of time that they will have to clean up soon. Set a timer and tell them when it goes off it will be time to clean up.
- Ask them what the last toy they are going to play with will be before it's time to clean up.
- Try cleaning up to music — sing a song together while you clean up or try to finish cleaning up before a song finishes.
- If it takes too long to clean up because there are so many toys out, consider putting out less toys to begin with. Keep some in a box in a closet and rotate through toy choices.
- Also, try having them clean up toys as they finish an activity. If they are playing legos in one room, have them clean that up before they get out crayons at the table.
- Make cleaning up easier by using big buckets or bins that are labeled so the child has a clear idea of where toys belong.
- Make sure to praise your child when they clean up. Use specific praise— say, "I like how you ____." Kids will repeat behaviors that get attention.

