

THE POWER OF DISTRACTION

Distraction is generally better than confrontation.

DISTRACTION CAN BE A POWERFUL TOOL!

If distraction is going to work well, the child must be drawn toward something interesting -

The parent needs to have a safe and interesting alternative for to distract their child from a toy or situation that is not good for the child or is causing conflict or inappropriate behavior.



Example: If a child reaches for a sharp knife, the parent might offer the child a spoon, rubber scraper, or whisk. Sometimes it will be necessary to simply say "Not for touching" or "Ouch!" Such limits will be most effective when offered with firmness but also with an invitation to other activities.

Effective distractions often require an investment of time -

It doesn't take much time to grab a spoon or rubber scraper, but sometimes a child needs a new place to explore or something new to do. An old toy that was put up and brought out again cost nothing but it's like new. It is surprising to see what a child can do with a plain cardboard box, or a pool noodle that has been cut into small circles. It is not the number of toys that determines a child's enjoyment. In fact, some parents may find that having a few toys available and keeping others in storage is better for their child so that they can rotate through the toys.

Distraction 101

- 1.** Did you know that childproofing is a way of distracting a child away from hazardous situations?
- 2.** Sometimes the best distraction is just to leave the room and look for something else.
- 3.** Have you ever thought that the supermarket has it in for you? They do! Take something that you know your child loves to do, bring it out as you are waiting in line to distract from the cute stuff and candy at the check out. Alternatively, ask your child to help you load your groceries onto the counter, count items, or tell you the color of each item.