

A Clinical Treatment Guide to 10 Common Pediatric Behavioral Problems

Putting up Toys After Play

The Cipani 3 Toy Rule



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1. Have a place where toys are stored.

Does your child have a designated place where to put toys when she or he is done playing with them? Before your child can do his or her part, you must do yours. Toys should be stored in a designated area, either in bins, or where appropriate, on shelves. In other words, there must be a place for each toy.

2. The “Cipani 3-toy” rule!

Don't let your child drag out every toy and then expect that he or she will pick them up when the play activity is concluded! The Cipani 3-toy rule: No more than three toys out at one time. If your child desires a different toy, then he or she must put away one toy to take its place. Pretty simple, but the toil is in your follow-through. When the play activity ends, all of the toys (three or less) must be put up. You can set a timer for the cleanup. If the child does not have the toys cleaned up in the delineated period of time for cleanup, then some time is taken off the next play period to practice; “how to put up toys.”

3. Have defined play periods.

It is much easier to monitor the “Cipani 3-toy” rule if they are defined play activities, especially in the beginning. This requires that you designate the play activity schedule. I recommend this to any parent who has difficulty following the “Cipani 3-toy” rule.