



Fostering the Parent

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Getting Kids to Do as Asked

"This kid is driving me crazy! You'd think she could do the few little things I ask her to do without having to be reminded over and over! I don't know what is the matter with her!" It's not uncommon to hear frustrated parents talking like this. The good news is, it doesn't have to be this way.

Parents who have the most difficulty getting their children to do things generally fall into three categories:

1. **Parents who do not follow through with a consequence when their child fails to perform** - The most effective parents don't demand that their children do something, until they have first thought of what they will do if the child doesn't accomplish the task. Ineffective parents often give an order, wait to see if it will be carried out, and then, start hoping that they can think of a consequence. Too late! Times of frustration, disappointment or anger are terrible times to come up with effective consequences which need to be delivered in non-angry ways.
2. **Parents who make idle threats and/or reminders** - Children know how to handle this kind of parent. Some children don't comply. Some feel obligated to resist doing as told, just to see if the parent is actually going to do anything about it. Some comply, but complete the job only halfway. Regardless of the way the child handles it, the parent ends up frustrated and the child's feelings of responsibility and competence are damaged.
3. **Parents who say, "Do it Now!"** - Children have a subconscious preference for this approach. They just seem to instinctively know that a parent can never win this one. Just knowing that a parent can never make you "do it right now!" gives a child a sense of power. Children who don't feel a healthy level of personal control, learn that they can overpower adults just by "dragging their feet," and saying through their actions, "You can't control me."

*Set a Reasonable Deadline and
Don't Remind*

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Getting Kids to Do as Asked (con't.)

The Solution is a Reasonable Deadline

Step 1: Never say, "Do it now." It is always more effective to say, "I'd appreciate you picking up your room by 5:30 p.m. Thank you." Remember to add the thank you in advance. It shows that you don't expect less than pleasant compliance.

Step 2: Don't remind! Hope that the job does not get done. Your youngster can then have an opportunity to see that something actually happens when he/she doesn't cooperate. Keep the possible consequence a secret, so that it can come when least expected, just like a lightning bolt out of the sky.

Step 3: At precisely 5:31 p.m., pick up the room and put the clothes and toys where they can't be found.

Step 4: When the child asks about his/her things, say - "Oh, the clothes and toys? They didn't get picked up on time so they're gone. Every time you do something helpful around here, without being told, you can earn one of them back. It will be fun to see what you decide.



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