

# Get kids to accept 'no' without major battles

Mommy, can I spend the night at Ryan's house?  
No.  
Why can't I? You never let me have any fun! We already made plans. Tommy's parents are nice. They already said I could sleep over. You're being mean.

Pleeeeee! I'll do anything you say, just let me go. Why can't you be like other parents? You don't even care about me!  
It is possible to get children to accept "no" without a major battle. There are ways to peacefully handle children's requests. Here

is an alternative way to handle those endless demands and keep your children's self esteem intact as well as your sanity. This method discourages children from wearing you down and enables you to communicate respectfully with each other.

Parents typically fall into the trap of giving an instant "no" to kids' requests. Children quickly learn that they can change an instant "no" to a "yes" by whining, begging, anger, tears or tantrums. Parents also spend far too much energy investigat-

ing, questioning, and probing for details to make a decision. Make it the child's job to present the details needed to make an informed decision. The following process is for parents who struggle with kid's demands.

## PARENT'S CORNER



Marilyn Suttle

asked him if there was anything else he wanted me to know in order to make my decision. After a moment of thinking, he began assuring me that he wouldn't leave the controller sitting in the middle of the family room floor because he knows I like the house to look neat.

I told him (step 3) I would make my decision once he found out the price and availability of the unit. That was the end of our conversation. From past experience he knew not to bug me for an answer beforehand or the answer would definitely be no.

A few days later, I realized that he had really done quite a job in presenting me with a well thought out request. Later that day I asked him, "Did you put a lot of thought into how you asked me for that game machine?" He responded with: "Me and my friends spent all Friday night figuring out how to get our parents to buy us one!"

By giving myself time to consider his request, without being hassled, I was able to make a decision I felt good about. I realized that while he would love to get the video machine on his birthday, by Christmas the thrill would be gone. I had my doubts that it would even be possible to find this popular item in stores. There were several other things he wanted that I would rather buy him. Things he would enjoy and benefit from much more than a video game machine. Also, I strongly believe that children should help pay for expensive items. They take better care of the belongings they worked for and saved to own. When the price became available, I gave him my decision (step 4) not to buy the PlayStation 2. He was disappointed but accepted it. Quickly he focused on the other things he would like for his birthday. When family members asked my son what they could give him for Christmas, he asked for money, and is now saving up to buy the PlayStation 2.

By following this procedure, it shows kids that their thoughts and feelings are worthy of being considered. It also discourages them from attempting to wear you down with constant whining, begging and tantrums. With regular use, your children reap the richest rewards. Children who become accustomed to this approach, think and prepare before they ever approach you. Children soon stop bringing outrageous requests to you because they've already done their mental homework and realize the request will not be granted.

They gain life skills. They learn how to effectively approach someone in a logical way to present their requests. They will use these skills in many ways throughout their life with teachers, job interviews, neighbors and clients. By consistently using this approach, we empower our children and ourselves to handle requests effectively.

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