

Common Home Behaviors

Parents typically have similar gripes with their kid's behaviors while raising them. More times than not, a behavior that your child is struggling with can be categorized below.

Take a look at the top 9 most common parent complaints that I have been asked about over the years. I have provided you with some background into the problem along with several interventions to try. Change will take time. Stick to the interventions and be prepared to use them regularly until your child starts realizing that change is here to stay. Above all else, be consistent!

Failure to listen. If you are reading this section, I am confident that this is no new struggle for you as a parent. I swear, kids seem to be hard-wired to test their parents through means of not listening to them, telling them, "No", or trying to manipulate themselves out of a task they have been asked to do. Wouldn't life be so much easier if your kids did as they were told? Here are some ideas for you to try to make that dream a reality.

- Make eye contact with your child before and during your request to them. If they are of a young age, get down on their level when speaking to them. It is unrealistic to expect that shouting between rooms will get the job done.
- Have your child repeat what they are to do. That way both of you have a clear understanding of each other.

Is impulsive/hyper and has difficulty with self-control. Children who blurt things out without thinking, have a hard time sitting still, touch others and their things without asking, and have a hard time getting along with others all fit into this category. At some time or another we all seem to fit somewhere in that description. However, it is when your child begins to struggle frequently in life due to this lack of self-control that something needs to be done.

- Teach your child how to stop, think, and go. This strategy supports the child in stopping his actions (with prompting from you to begin with), thinking about a good choice that can be made, and going to try that good choice. Good modeling of this strategy from you along with frequent practice can help your child make positive choices.
- When your child acts inappropriately, stop them and remove them from the situation. Tell your child specifically why you stopped them and what you need to see from them before returning.

Does not complete his chores. You ask your child to complete a job around the house. Simple enough, right?! – Not always! Maybe you leave a note or maybe you are really good and have a chore chart in your home. However you do it, it ends up being anything but simple. Trying to get children to complete chores can be a difficult task to master. Don't give up and start doing everything on your own. That will only add to your frustration.

You need help and your kids need to learn some responsibility!

- Provide guidelines for completing chores such as creating a chore chart and expecting that chores must be completed right after school and before the T.V. is turned on. Stick to these expectations to make chores a structured part of your child's daily routine.
- Ensure that there is complete understanding of your child's ability to complete the chore(s) that you request of them. Model how you want them done and don't expect your child to be perfect. They are still learning and growing. Show patience and appreciation for the job that gets completed to the best of their ability.

Is disrespectful to others. Situations might start off as bickering but they quickly escalate into an argument (even with young children); and before you know it, your child starts walking around with a chip on their shoulder thinking that they can talk and act however they like. Get on top of that now! The longer you wait to correct it, the worse it will be. Yelling and throwing more attitude at your kid won't solve your problem, but these ideas may help.

- Calmly sit with your child and explain exactly how you want them to talk to and treat others and why. Practice with your child and remind them of these expectations in a caring way. Give praise for any improvements that you see – this will foster a drive for more success. Tip: do this teaching when the disrespectful attitude isn't present, you'll get much further if you wait until the time is right.
- Give no more than one warning for inappropriate behavior. If it continues after that warning, remove your child from the situation. When you are both calm, talk with them about what happened, and create a solution together that will help to prevent the behavior in the future.

Lies. For some kids, lies can roll off their tongues just as easy as everyday conversation occurs. This of course is concerning to a great number of parents. Honesty is a moral virtue that we want our kids to possess, and we wish that more people had it. Honesty starts with you, and here's how.

- Be a positive role model. Don't lie, don't stretch the truth, just be honest. I'm not just talking about with your kids, but with everyone. You are being watched at every moment of your day by your children. They are learning how to live by watching you. If they hear you being dishonest, this becomes their way of life too.
- Explain the reasons of why it is important to be honest with others. Allowing your child to have this knowledge will help them to improve his social relationships with you and others. Provide natural consequences for your child if they lie. Make the consequence match the offense. For example, if they lied about something that happened with a friend, they should be grounded from that friend.

Does not follow the rules. By nature, kids will test the rules and boundaries that are set for them. This is their way of learning about life, consequences, and important skills such as respect, responsibility, honesty, and safety. Don't be too alarmed at periodic questioning of the rules or at undesirable behavior. These are opportunities for you to work through the negative choices that your child made and to create a positive learning experience.

- Make sure your child knows and understands the rules. Without full understanding of the rules, it is unreasonable to expect your child to do well. Have a rules chart, explain the reasons for the rules and review them often. Also of importance is showing your child how to follow the rules. Be a positive model of the rules when you are discussing them and strive to follow them every day.
- Praise your child for following the rules or even a partial rule. Make a big deal of their accomplishments no matter how small. Give attention to others in the home who are following the rules as well. Provide examples of how your child and others have followed the rules and why it make you proud. Positive reinforcement will go a long way here.

Has tantrums. Let's be honest, unless your child has a developmental disability, a child beyond the toddler ages should not be tantruming any longer. Quite frankly it is ridiculous and completely preventable. Tantrums are attention seeking behaviors and a huge attempt by your child to get his own way. Been there, done that, all done now! Read on.

- Do not buy into your child's tantrums. Ignore the behavior unless your child is hurting him/herself or another person. If your child receives no attention from their behavior, it will likely stop.
- In a calm voice, tell your child what you expect from before they will get your attention. I have found it helpful to say, "When you are sitting quietly, I will come over to be with you". Until then, keep your distance as to not give any reinforcement to the tantrum. Once your child is calm, talk about the positive behavior that they are currently showing and give them some other options instead of tantruming for the next time they get upset.

Keeps secrets. It can be concerning to a parent when their child hides things from them. We want to know what is going on in our child's life so we can keep them safe. The truth is, you can't protect them forever. What you can do is to raise them with the skills to make the best decisions possible along with knowledge of how to fix their mistakes.

- From a young age, encourage your children to be open with you. Say to them, "You can tell me anything, no matter what it is". Repeat this over and over again throughout the years and give praise to your children for telling you how they feel and what they want. It is during all of these little times of self-disclosure when they are young that will pave the way for more important and heavy conversations in the teenage years.
- When your child confides in you, take some time to process what they are telling you before giving a reaction, especially if your child is telling you some undesirable news. An over-the-top reaction given to your child who may already be nervous in telling you something, will send the message that they never should have come to you in the first place. Yelling or punishment will make your child think twice before coming to you in the future. Stay calm and talk calmly with your child. Praise them for coming to you and reassure them that you are always here to help. *Tip:* Keep in mind that as a parent you

have to not only show that you are on your child's side, but you also have to be a disciplinarian if it is so warranted. Giving a consequence to your child can be done in a sensitive and understanding way. This will allow your child to understand natural consequences and hopefully gain some valuable insight into how to take personal responsibility.

Does not take personal responsibility. Whether to avoid trouble or an undesirable task, kids will commonly blame others or come up with excuses as to why something happened or didn't happen. Whatever the reason or situation, responsibility is a life skill that all children will need as an adult.

- Explain to your child exactly what they haven't taken responsibility for and what they should do now to make it right. Make a plan for future occurrences and provide positive and negative consequences based on your child's actions. These consequences should be talked about and agreed upon together.
- Supervise your child to help support them in taking personal responsibility and to help them to feel comfortable coming to you when help is needed. As always, be a positive role model. Your children learn best from watching you.