

**Good parenting** is not about making sure your child is happy. A big part of it is about helping him or her learn to deal confidently with setbacks and adversities that are an inevitable part of life. Your goal should be to teach your children all they will need to know that will enable them to function well as adults; things such as the important correlation between their behavior and its consequences (both good and bad), the concepts of accountability and responsibility, and appropriate ways to solve problems and make good choices.

Our most important role is raising our kids to become capable, well-adjusted human beings. And in this consumer-driven, materialistic-pushing world we're in, it's not always so easy. We seem to have a lot of "demanding" kids these days and it's because they've learned that their parents will oblige their every whim. So just watch out before you again end up giving what you do not want to...!

Seriously ask yourself, "Am I raising my child to be self-reliant and fiscally capable?" One of our biggest jobs is to help our kids learn to live successfully on their own. Doing so means they will need to learn how to manage their own money and not expect handouts from us.

Unspoiled kids have learned to not always put themselves first, but instead to consider the needs of others. Are you emphasizing the virtues of empathy and kindness with your child?

**Add "no" to your vocabulary** and don't feel guilty about using it with your kids. Always giving kids what they want does not help kids learn that you don't always get what you want in life. Constantly rescuing kids from their frustrations does not help them learn critical coping skills.

### **Define Boundaries (Rules) Before Enforcing Them.**

The child should know what is expected of him before he is held responsible for it. Remember, *If you haven't defined it, don't enforce it!*

### **Always Respond; Never React**

Respond with confident decisiveness when challenged.

1. Acknowledge the child's feelings.
2. Provide a choice or alternative.
3. Disengage from the behavior.

### **Distinguish Between Willful Defiance & Childish Irresponsibility.**

Parental disciplinary response should be determined by the child's intention. Remember this when establishing consequences.

**WILLFUL DEFIANCE** is a deliberate act of disobedience. It occurs when the child knows what his parents expect from him and is determined to do the opposite.

**CHILDISH IRRESPONSIBILITY** results from a child's being a child. He is forgetful, has accidents, has a short attention span and a low frustration tolerance, and he is immature.

**Reassure and teach after the confrontation is over.**

Children should be assured of parental love regardless of their behavior. The debriefing technique provides an excellent teaching opportunity. These simple questions help us to reassure, teach and guide child in the desirable direction. For e.g.

1. Why did you lose such and such?
2. What will happen if such and such happens again?
3. How can you do it differently in the future?

**The best gifts to give kids are intangible; your child needs your "presence" more than your "presents."**

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