

Here's Some Solid Advice in Dealing With Unruly Kids

The moment you held your baby for the first time was beautiful. It was a clean slate.

As you projected into the future, all you could see were positive times ahead. You may have foreseen the typical problems in parenting, but you knew how you were going to handle it. The future was bright.

You weren't expecting your child to one day ignore your rules, show little respect for you or others, throw tantrums to get their way, and display a consistent attitude of entitlement and lack of gratitude.

As you experience consistent bad behavior, you may be concerned that you are raising a brat. Do you feel powerless as they slip out of control? In the middle of a battle, do you feel unsure of what to do? Are you at your wit's end?

You can turn that around by following a couple of easy principles. Here's advice for bratty kids.

Consistency

A lack of consistency will bring confusion and anxiety for both of you. For younger kids, dos and don'ts are black and white. Do not be vague, ambiguous, or uncertain. You need to give them clear boundaries. "These are the things you can do and these are the things you can't." Have good and solid reasons for the boundaries you are setting.

Work them out in your mind, write them down, and practice explaining them. That doesn't matter as much when kids are young but will as they get older. Boundaries need to be held consistently. In other words, you always have to be on your

game. Every minute of every day is an opportunity to mold and shape their attitude.

Consequences and Explanations

Reinforce the boundaries you set with consequences. Never threaten them with a consequence you will not follow-through on. If you say you are going to take something away, cancel a fun trip, or administer a spanking, then you need be ready to do it. I would say, you need to almost welcome it. The moment they cross the line, enforce the warning. Be quick, decisive, and calm. If they throw a tantrum or speak to you disrespectfully, add another consequence. They need to know that anything you say will be followed-through.

You are doing more than punishing bad attitudes and behavior. You are showing them that you are trustworthy which will actually make them feel more secure. Then give them an explanation of why they are receiving a consequence so it is understood clearly. Have them repeat back to you what they heard so you can clarify further if needs be.

Practice Appropriate Behavior

If they have treated anyone, particularly adults, with rudeness or disrespect, practice with them. Teach them how they are to act when meeting an adult. Show them proper eye contact, manners, what to say and what not to say. Then have them practice. If they ask you for something and don't say, "please", make them ask again or simply deny the request. If they don't say "thank you" when giving them dessert, or perhaps dinner, don't give it to them until they do.

Personal Responsibility

Make them earn toys and money rather than just giving it to them. Use them as a reward system for good attitudes, noble treatment of others, and chores completed. Don't give an allowance that hasn't been earned in some way. The only thing

it will create is a sense of entitlement. Create a checklist of things they need to do to earn money or things.

You are teaching them practical things that will help them in the real world. If they do not display a strong work ethic, appropriate manners, and a grateful attitude, they will not be hired for a job or promoted within a company.

What do you do when your child is disrespectful? Huddle up with your kids and ask, "What does it mean to be respectful?"

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