

# Handling Resistance



**From toddlers to teens and all ages in between, children often say “no!” to whatever it is we think they should be doing. Here are some ideas for working with them.**

**1. Set clear and consistent expectations, and establish a time when you expect to have things accomplished.** *“Tina, put on your uniform, have your gear together, and be ready for me to take you to soccer practice at 3:15.”*

**2. Make sure children have the competency and skills to do what you are asking.** Take the time to walk them through the process, even if you think it is something they should know. Spell out the different parts of a job: *“Please wash the pots and pans that are in the sink, dry them and put them away on the bottom shelf of the brown cupboard.”*

**3. If you are asking them to figure out how to do something new or different, provide instruction and praise their attempt, even if the final product is not what you wanted.**

- 4. Give children choices wherever possible.** *“Jeremy, for your chore today, would you rather vacuum the living room or sweep the kitchen? I will do whichever one you don't want to do.”*
- 5. Don't give children a choice when there really is no choice.** When they have just ten minutes to get dressed for school, asking: *“Do you want the red shirt today or the blue one?”* makes life more complicated for all concerned.
- 6. Family expectations help limit resistance.** When everyone does chores, it's harder to refuse to do your share.
- 7. Build habits when children are young.** Brushing teeth, putting clothes in the hamper, picking up your dishes after a meal, when done daily, become a habit rather than a job.
- 8. Don't address the attitude, just the action.** Fighting with a child because of a tone in their voice or the lack of a smile gets nowhere. Focus instead on what needs to be done.
- 9. Put a value on cooperation.** Build rewards into a job. Some parents are afraid this is bribery, but there is a difference. *“If we work together to get the job done, we can have pizza tonight,”* is different than *“I will give you two dollars to pick up your room.”*
- 10. Recognize that tasks and responsibilities are not always fun.** Praise children for their efforts. Thank them for their contribution to the family.
- 11. Maintain a sense of humor, and try not to take things personally.**

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