You Can’t Tell Me What to Do!

If you have a preschooler in any kind of childcare arrangement, you may hear sometime that the child was “fresh, impudent, rude and insulting” or something to that effect.

This happens to single parents raising their children alone. It happens to two-parent families where both parents work, and it happens to families where one parent is at home most of the time and the childcare is only occasional.

Why? It’s because preschoolers feel that their parents—their mothers especially—are the only ones who have the right to correct them.

Mother and father have the right to “make me do things,” to talk to children about “wrong” things they’ve done, and to tell children what they can and can’t do. But children sometimes resist this mightily from anyone other than their parents.

When caregivers—or even close relatives—take on these rights, children react quickly. And this reaction is logical to a child. “They” are not the authority: mom and dad are.

While it doesn’t seem right that the child should get by with such “smart backtalk,” punishment by the caregiver will not be logical to the kids. They believe that parents, the authorities, should give punishment.

When you learn of such a situation, don’t correct the child with an angry reaction. Try to keep your relationship with your child intact. Withhold judgment until you’ve had a chance to find out the whole story.

Remember, the incident will have happened long enough before you and your child see each other again. As far as the youngster is concerned, it never happened.

A conference with the caregiver to exchange information about your child’s present behavior and needs may be helpful. It may help to explain to the child that when she is at home, her parents are in charge.

In the same way, at childcare, when a parent can’t be there, another adult may sometimes need to make choices and decisions and direct her behavior. That person is concerned about her safety and wellbeing.

You also could tell your child that that person must not only be responsible for her, but for the welfare and wellbeing of the rest of the children. Therefore, the caregiver may need to take on some of the same type of authority as the parents.

Remember, this type of behavior is temporary, and it will pass.

Source: Growing Together, December, 2009

Bear-ly Clean!

Teddy bears are objects of unconditional love. They snuggle into beds at night. They travel in backpacks, in car seats and on airplanes. They endure sticky fingers, dusty corners and gooey kisses. It’s no wonder that this best buddy might just need a bath!

Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, recommends that you start by vacuuming off any dust and loose grime. Then check for split seams; repair them before cleaning.
**Bear-ly Clean!** (Continued)

If teddy has a sound box or other mechanical or electronic device, it will need to be removed. Otherwise, washing will cause it to rust or create a corrosive residue and it won’t work anymore.

If there are any particularly nasty stains, pretreat them by rubbing a little bit of liquid detergent directly on the stain. Then put teddy into a pillowcase and secure it shut with a knot, rubber band, or hair elastic. Although teddy won’t mind being washed with other stuffed animals, don’t overfill the pillowcase. Those cozy companions need room to move around. Wash in the washing machine on the gentle cycle with a small amount of detergent. Before putting teddy in the dryer, check to make sure the stains are gone. Close up the pillowcase again and put teddy in the dryer on low heat.

If teddy’s fur needs a bit of “fluffing,” brush it gently with an old, clean hairbrush.

*Source: SDA Cleaning Matters, Nov/Dec, 2009*

**“Green” Gifting**

Save money, save the planet and celebrate the holidays? Sounds like “Mission Impossible!”

But if you like a challenge—here’s a few tips to try:

- **Give a Priceless Gift**—When you make a gift, you give of your time—the most valued gift of all. Make a “Gift of Time” certificate for a chore an older relative cannot easily do, or a trip to the park or a slumber party for the kids.

- **Send Email holiday greeting cards to save money and the environment.** Draw, design and print your own cards, gift tags and mailing labels from old cards or recycled paper.

- Holiday plants such as poinsettias and Christmas cactus make wonderful “green” gifts for any budget. Plants can be enjoyed long after the holiday season is over.

- **Give local products like locally grown produce, honey or work from a local artist.**

- **Give a non material gift such as tickets to an event, dance lessons or membership in the YMCA.**

*Source: Budget a Green Holiday, Alicia Betancourt, University of Florida Extension*

**Read Everyday!**

Reading aloud is the single most important way to ensure your child’s future successes. This holiday season consider the gift of a special book or even better: that gift of regular time alone with your child to snuggle up and enjoy a good story. It fosters your child’s sense of security and belonging. The Ready to Succeed program offers some great ideas for making the most of that quiet time together:

- Use different voices for different characters as you read—it makes the book come alive!

- Find a cozy place to read together and call it your reading spot!

- Run your fingers under the words of the story as you read them.

- After reading a book, make a paper sack puppet for one of the characters and retell the story.

- Tell your family’s story by looking through photo albums.

*Source: Ready to Succeed, ceplacer.ucdavis.edu*

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Hope everyone has a Happy and Safe Holiday Season!