

# Saying 'No' Without Saying 'No'

Setting boundaries provides children with a sense of security. However, spending the majority of your time saying 'no' can have a negative impact on the relationship with your child. Hearing 'no' too often can result in resentment and rebellion.

**These are some substitutions to the word 'no':**

## What To Do

Instead of saying what your child cannot do, state what he can do. Instead of shouting "no" when he throws a ball in the house, say "you can throw the ball in the backyard or in the basement." If your child is running in the house, consider saying "if you run in the house, you can get hurt and then you won't be able to have fun playing." You may offer another option: "you can go to the park later where you will be able to run." When your child climbs on chairs you can say "chairs are for sitting." Instead of saying "you can't have another cookie" say "yes, we can have another cookie after dinner."

## Explain The Consequence

Instead of just saying 'no,' explain the consequence of the behavior and why it is beneficial to comply. "This



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knife is dangerous. You could get cut and then you won't be able to play and have fun." Or "I know you want ice cream. I know how delicious it is, but if you eat another bowl you can get a very bad stomach ache and then you wouldn't be able to have fun or play the rest of the night."

## Redirection

Especially with younger children, distractions can be effective. "We can't play with that. Come over here and help me choose a game to play." If your child is acting inappropriately at a social function, instead of saying "no" you can redirect by saying "let's go look at the fish," or "let's count how many people are here" or "let's go outside on a scavenger hunt."

## Home Check

Is your home child-friendly? Are

there areas within the home where children have access to safe items or is the majority of your home off-limits? If your home is set up in a way that necessitates saying 'no' to most objects your child wants to use or play, it may help to find a way to set up a safe space that offers opportunities to say "yes" more frequently.

## Rule Review

Instead of saying 'no' to what your child is doing/requesting, ask him to state the rule. If your child asks for chips before dinner, you can say "what is the rule about snacks before dinner? When are we allowed to have chips?"

## Choose Your Battles

Do you feel as though you are in constant conflict with your child? Begin to consider what actions you can ignore. Children will naturally test boundaries and seek independence.

While making certain they are safe, consider which minor things can be overlooked. If your child is having fun without harming himself or others, even if it conflicts with your need for peace or cleanliness or order, let it happen from time to time.

If "no" is said too often, children can become desensitized to the word. It can lead to your having to say 'no' numerous times before being effective. Alternatives to the word 'no' can be useful in getting compliance without compromising the relationship.

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## Correction

PetPass Mobile Grooming services that appeared on page 12A of Anton's We Love Our Pets page in the Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2016 edition should read "Trim & Proper and UPPER Class service..."

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