

How to avoid those arguments

So often parents get caught in the trap of arguing with their children. As their child may have learnt from past experience, if they keep going on at Mum and Dad, this will get them what they want because Mum or Dad will get sick of them going on about it. Although having discussions around things is important, it is vital that when parents make a decision about something, they stick to their decision. If your child comes to you with a 'want', give a reason why you have reached your decision, and then don't buy into any of the discussion that your child wants to get into about your decision. The best thing to do is to just totally ignore any comments that come back at you.

So often I hear parents say that they put their children into 'time out' or 'quiet time' for speaking back at them. It is far easier to just totally ignore the comment, walk away, so you can't react to any remarks they make. If you consistently respond in this way then your child will stop making those comments as they won't get the reaction they used to. There is plenty of other opportunities to promote discussion when your authority isn't going to be challenged or undermined; situations such as conversations around what has been happening, or when you are showing an interest in their day.

A recent example of how it works is when a Mother informed her 4 year old that she wasn't allowed to go to the park with her friend. The mother explained why it wasn't okay for her to go, including the fact that she needed an adult to accompany them, and that all the adults around were too busy getting dinner and doing other necessary things at the time. The child protested, and screamed at her Mother about how it wasn't fair etc. The Mother simply turned her back on her daughter and got on with the dinner preparations and totally ignored the reaction her daughter was giving. There was even some swear words coming out of her mouth which the Mother continued to ignore. The child calmed down after a short period of time and went off to find something else to do. Later when sitting having dinner – the Mother calmly talks about the use of swear words and how it is unacceptable in this house and if she hears them again, then there will be a consequence.

In the past, this situation would have been quite different – the child would have reacted in a very similar way and the Mother would have spoken back saying that the answer is still no, etc. The child would respond again and this would go on with voices being raised until someone broke. What a difference just walking away makes – and so much easier as well.

Good luck and be firm – stick to your decisions and ignore the protests.

This tip is brought to you by the Nelson Kindergarten Association and SKIP – (Strategies for Kids – Information for Parents.) If you would like to discuss this tip or any other parenting information please contact Brenda on 546 7683.

