

No More Whining!

By Julie Tilsner

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When it comes to torture, we could all learn a thing or two from kids. Who knows better than they how to extract most anything they want within minutes of applying the technique? I'm talking about whining, of course -- that grating mewling that causes us to do anything (anything!) just to make it go away. But you can break the habit. And the rewards of victory can be rich for both of you.

Toddlers

Why they do it: Early talkers whine like babies cry. Some experts say that whining tends to peak in a child's development when she's feeling out of control and overwhelmed -- emotions that pretty much sum up toddlerhood. She lacks the vocabulary to articulate her frustrations, and that whimpering is the natural default noise.

Certain triggers, such as hunger and fatigue, can also cause breakdowns (true for kids of all ages), so keep that in mind the next time you take your toddler grocery shopping close to naptime.

How to stop it: Patience becomes the first rule when confronted with these early bouts of whining. When her son, Matthew, who's almost 3, melts down because he can't wait ten more minutes for dinner, Rae Sullivan of Durham, North Carolina, gives him a little extra attention, like five minutes of lap or snuggle time. Those five minutes are well spent if it means she can finish cooking without another whinefest. Tossing him a few crackers to eat in the meantime doesn't hurt, either.

"A lot of toddlers don't even know they're whining," says Sheila Oliveri, a mom of three and a nursery school teacher in St. Louis. So give your little complainer an exaggerated demonstration: "Whyyyyyy are you taaaalkingg like thaaaaaat?" The result will be twofold: "You'll show her exactly how irritating whining is," says Oliveri, "and you may make her laugh, which will make her forget why she was complaining in the first place."

Or try recording your child. Play it back to her so she knows what she sounds like, and work with her on better ways to ask for the things she wants or needs.

Besides contributing regularly to Parenting, Julie Tilsner writes about kids and food at [badhomecooking.blogspot.com](#).



Whining can be a sign that kids want something but aren't sure how to get it

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