



Why Won't My Children Behave? I've Tried Everything!

There are times when all parents feel like they can't get it right, when they are too impatient, too critical or too harsh on their children. When they have tried everything, yet their children still won't behave. Reaching this point can be an important time to reassess you and your child's anger and what actions are needed to parent effectively.

Questions To Ask Yourself:

- Am I expecting too much for my child's age?
- Do I tend to scream? Am I too strict?
- Have there been any major changes in our lives?
- Am I concerned about losing control?
- Am I under a lot of stress?

Teach Acceptable Ways To Express Feelings:

When someone's feelings are truly hurt, ask your child to rephrase the anger in a more acceptable manner. Use the opportunity to teach your child empathy.



State Angry Feelings Without Accusing Anyone:

Parental anger can be useful when it is expressed in non-judgmental language, such as "This irritates me," or for stronger feelings, "This makes me very angry." Be aware of how your voice, tone, expressions and body language convey your message. Try to imagine how your child is hearing the words you are about to say before you say them.

Never Expose Your Children To Hurtful Anger:

Avoid using expressions like, "I could wring your neck," or other threats that can be harmful and scary to children. Give yourself a moment to calm down when you are intensely angry. Then, aim your disapproval at the child's behavior, not their character. Instead of saying, "you rotten kid," say, "I do not like what you are doing right now."

Reinforce the Behavior You Want To Encourage

- Make sure your child understands your rules;
- Look for the *reason* for the behavior;
- Listen to your child, Try to empathize with your child;
- Learn more about the stages children go through;
- Give your child individual attention each day;
- Take care of your own needs, too;
- Be willing to ask for help, especially if you feel like hurting your child.

Adapted from Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention, with suggestions courtesy of Bellflower Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse and The Learning Curve.

**Remember,
everyone has
rough days, even
your child.
It's all part of
growing up!**



Community Resource Kit

Alaska Children's Trust 1-800-643-KIDS

Alaska Child Abuse Prevention Network. akchildabuseprevention.org