

# PARENTING TIPS

## Monitoring Frustration Levels

When allowing a child to solve a problem, it's important to monitor the frustration level. A little frustration, overcome by persistence, builds determination. Too much frustration causes discouragement. Coaching your child through the problem-solving process requires patience and sensitivity.

Here's where the parent's role becomes so important. Unfortunately some parents turn into drill sergeants commanding their children, and telling them exactly how to solve a problem. Other parents just take over and solve the problem themselves.

If six-year-old Paul announces at dinner, "I don't have a fork," the temptation is for Mom to just get up and get one for him or to give him hers. A wise parent may respond by simply saying, "I see you have a problem there, Paul. What do you think you ought to do about it?"

Some parents feel that just reflecting the problem this way isn't loving. They say, "I just couldn't do that. It doesn't seem right." What these parents don't realize, though, is that this loving response demonstrates confidence in your children that they can solve their own problems. Parents shouldn't turn their backs and walk away. Rather, a wise parent can help a child evaluate the choices, offer suggestions, and then praise the child for the accomplishment. Children grow in confidence as they learn to solve problems for themselves.

Paul may decide that a fork isn't necessary and then be content to use a spoon. His mom or dad could praise him for his flexibility. He may get up to get a fork out of the drawer only to find that all the forks are gone. Solving problems isn't always easy. He may find a clean one not yet put away or choose to wash a fork that's dirty on the counter.

At each step along the way, the parent may be tempted to step in but a wise parent can offer just enough guidance to allow the child to feel the accomplishment of problem solving. Monitoring the frustration level can help a parent know when to step in and when to allow the child to learn independently.

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This parenting tip comes from the book, [Home Improvement, The Parenting Book You Can Read to Your Kids](#) by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN