

PARENTING TIPS

Obey First and Then We'll Talk About It

When parents give an instruction but children don't want to comply or it's not convenient for them, sometimes they need to learn to "obey first and then we'll talk about it." This emphasizes obedience.

If little Brian has pulled a chair over to the counter and is climbing onto it, you may say, "Brian, we don't climb on chairs."

"But I was just..."

"No, you need to get down. Obey first and then we'll talk about it." Once he gets down, discuss the problem, and find a solution together.

"Karl, go get your pajamas on."

"I don't want to go to bed."

"No, obey first and then we'll talk about it."

To some parents this may sound like blind obedience. We've all heard stories about people who were led into cultish activity because they couldn't think for themselves. No parent wants a child to fall into a pattern of blindly following a leader's instructions, but evaluating instructions is an advanced skill.

Many parents have gone too far in the other direction ending up with children who can't follow simple instructions without a dialogue. Parents sometimes believe they have to talk their child into wanting to obey. Inadvertently, these parents teach their children that if you don't like a request then that's enough reason to resist it. These children make poor employees, develop selfish attitudes about following someone else's leadership, and have a difficult time in relationships because they haven't learned how to sacrifice their own agenda for others.

Talking is important but sometimes even we, as adults, must obey first and then understand later. God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son without fully understanding and then considered it faith for him to obey. Peter didn't know why he was to go to Cornelius' house but went anyway only to discover that God wanted to bring salvation to the Gentiles. Philip was asked to leave a revival in Samaria and go out into the wilderness, not knowing why, but when he got there he led an Ethiopian man to Christ.

Evaluating instructions is an advanced skill and will become important later on but children need to learn that sometimes we all must "obey first and then we'll talk about it."

This parenting tip comes from the book *Say Goodbye to Whining, Complaining, and Bad Attitudes, In You and Your Kids* by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN