

# 30 CREATIVE solutions to

# 7 COMMON parenting challenges

## SUBDUING TANTRUMS

1. Hold the child's hands, get down on his or her level and whisper, "If you stop, we can hug it out." Sometimes kids will have worked themselves into a tizzy beyond their ability to stop, in which case you can still hug them tight and whisper soothing words in their ears, even if they squirm. Sometimes what our kids really need is security and affection in order to calm down.
2. Use a code word. For example, "code red" or even something silly like "watermelon" means, "Your behavior is about to get out of hand, and if you do not calm down, there will be consequences." This works best for older kids who have more ability to self-regulate their emotions than toddlers do.

## GETTING KIDS TO PICK UP THEIR TOYS

3. Do a 10-minute pickup. Set a timer and pick up as much as you can in ten minutes. This works especially well when the whole family pitches in!
4. Pick up by color. "Put away all the blue toys! Now put away all the red toys!"
5. Tell them whatever they don't pick up by the end of the day becomes property of Mom and Dad. They must do chores to earn back these items.
6. Teach them to put one toy away before they can play with another. Hahahaha, yeah right. This has never worked for most of us, but more power to the mom who makes it happen.
7. For older kids, try this trick for motivating chores (beyond just picking up toys). Display a list of chores. Allow each child to pick one. As soon as they're done with that chore, they can pick the next one. Because most kids will prefer to avoid the "yucky" chores, they'll be more motivated to work fast and not dawdle—so they don't get stuck scrubbing toilets.

## GETTING KIDS' ATTENTION (WITHOUT SHOUTING)

8. Ring a bell or blow a whistle.
9. Clap a rhythm and train them to clap it back. This is a school teacher's trick, and it works!
10. Say "guess what!!!" in a really excited voice. It usually grabs their attention.
11. Shout "1-2-3, eyes on me!" And have the kids reply, "1-2, eyes on you!"

## GETTING KIDS TO EAT THEIR VEGGIES

12. Make smoothie popsicles. Sneak in some pureed carrots, pumpkin or spinach.
13. Have crunching contests! Serve raw carrots and peppers and see who can crunch the loudest.
14. Demonstrate how delicious veggies are. Eat them yourself and say, "Wow, these are SO good!"
15. Pay the kids 25 cents for every day they consume five servings of fruits and veggies.
16. Use the "one-bite" rule. (Some families call it the "no thank you" bite). Kids have to try one bite of a new food, then they're welcome to refuse the full serving if they don't like it. Let them rate the flavor: thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs to the side. This becomes a fun game the whole family can play!

## SIBLING FIGHTS

17. Make the kids huddle together inside one oversized shirt until they work it out. (Daddy's old T-shirts work great for this.) Chances are they'll start giggling and forget all about fighting.
18. Make them hold hands and say something they love about each other. Challenge them to outdo each other in compliments. Once again, they might end up giggling. ("I really love your butt." "No, I really really really love YOUR butt, teeheehee!")
19. Every time the kids bicker, give them 10 minutes of yard work.
20. Tell them they can only fight outside. Enforce this in any kind of weather.
21. Ask the kids, "Would Jesus say that about you?" Or "Would Jesus say that about your sister/brother?" Of course the answer is usually "no." Then follow up with, "Well, what would He say?" This gives the kids a chance to reinforce their worth in Christ, such as, "He would say I'm beautiful and special and I do not smell like poop."
22. As a family, memorize Proverbs 17:17, "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is always there to help you." When the children act unkind to each other, misquote the verse on purpose. "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is always there to hit you." The kids will correct you, which helps them acknowledge their misbehavior.
23. When all else fails, ban the children from interacting with each other at all. Send them to separate rooms and prohibit them from playing together. This usually helps them to realize how much they actually do want to be together.

## HANDLING BEGGING OR WHINING

24. Tell the kids, "I'm sorry, I don't understand you when you whine." And stick to it!
25. When at the grocery store, tell the kids there will be no begging. If they obey and do not beg, they can get a treat. If they beg, no treat. (In other words, the answer to begging is always "no.")
26. If kids beg for a new toy, game, etc., ask them if they want it more than XXX (some favorite toy they already have at home). Explain that you will gladly trade their favorite XXX for this new toy. In most cases, they will realize by comparison that they don't want the new object that much after all.
27. Start a complaining jar! Every time a child persists in complaining, he must put a coin of his own money into the jar. At the end of the month, give the money to charity.

## GETTING KIDS TO STAY IN BED

28. At bedtime (for night owls who like to come out of bed after lights out):  
Use a "bedtime pass." Give it to your child when you tuck her in, then if she gets out of bed to get a drink, go to the bathroom, or ask for one more hug and kiss, she needs to give Mom the bedtime pass. When you tuck her back into bed again, she knows she has already used up her one pass for the night and won't get another one!
29. Play special music that the kids can listen to only at bedtime, or have a special stuffed animal they can snuggle with only in bed.
30. In the morning (for too-early risers):  
Tell the kids they have two options. They can either (1) stay in their room reading or playing quietly until 7 a.m. or (2) they can come out of their room and do chores until 7 a.m. Either way, you win!