

Whining: Why it Happens and How to Stop it

Why do children whine? Why do children who are 5, 6, and 7 years old continue to whine? There are two answers to this question that parents have been asking forever. First, children whine to get their parent's attention. Second, whining has worked in the past to get what the children want so now, it is a habit.

What is a parent to do?! Not to worry, there are some simple steps to follow to stop whining. Now simple doesn't mean it is easy and that whining will automatically stop; it means that every parent can do it! It may take several weeks to change the habit of whining but it is worth it!

- **HAVE A PLAN**
 - ❖ Get all caregivers on the same page with you so message is consistent.
 - ❖ Give yourself visual clues or reminders to help you stick to your plan.
 - ❖ Tell the children that whining is no longer going to be accepted.

- **For Children 3 years and younger**
 - ❖ You have to help them identify the whining when it occurs.
 - ❖ Label their feelings around the whining – ex. “I think you are tired”.
 - ❖ Tell them whining hurts your ears – have them try again in a normal voice.
 - ❖ Provide lots of positive reinforcement.
 - ❖ Don't give into whining.

- **For Children 4 years and up**
 - ❖ Whining is a habit now.
 - ❖ Tell them you will no longer respond to whining and mean it.
 - ❖ Help them develop other methods of communicating with you.
 - ❖ Model the tone of voice you want them to use at all times.
 - ❖ For the first few times, you may need to say “I can't hear you because you are whining. I'll talk with you when you can speak to me in your regular voice.”
 - ❖ Develop a simple gesture that reminds them when they are whining so they can change their tone of voice immediately.
 - ❖ Prepare them ahead of time to prevent whining. “We are going to the store but I will not be buying any candy today.”
 - ❖ Provide lots of positive reinforcement.

A key to preventing and stopping whining is to mean what you say and say what you mean!!!!


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