

What should I do when my child talks back?

It's normal for children to challenge their parents when limits are set and rules are enforced. Children often attempt to demonstrate their control over a situation or gain attention by talking back to their parents. Although a normal part of growing up, this behavior often frustrates parents. When this occurs, parents are encouraged to remain calm as their reaction will determine the outcome of the interaction. Often times, ignoring the comments made is more effective than engaging in a verbal confrontation. There are several ways that parents can discourage back talk, starting with having clear expectations and boundaries for their children. Praising children when they're behaving well and not talking back deters further misbehavior.

Parents should pay close attention to when their children typically tend to talk back so as to attempt to identify a pattern. If one is found, further steps can be taken to discourage back talk. Sometimes giving children transition time between activities and warnings of when they will need to complete a new task aids with this process and reduces resistance. Teaching children about outlets for their fury and irritation, such as playing a sport or drawing will also help as talking back is usually fueled by anger. Older children often respond well when parents encourage communication, attempt to problem solve, and reach a compromise. Listening is a crucial part of communicating and avoiding anger filled resistance. Parents are encouraged to emphasize and be flexible when warranted to reduce conflict with their children.