

1-2-3 Magic PARENTING

February 2016 Newsletter

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Getting Started with 1-2-3 Magic

One of the most frequent questions we get at 1-2-3 Magic workshops is this: **Do we tell the kids about the program first, or do we just start?** Here's the answer: For most kids over four or so, you're going to do what we call The Kickoff Conversation (Chapter 9). You're going to tell the kids about counting and about the new rules. You'll tell them that things are going to be different.

The Kickoff Conversation has two parts, a **verbal part** (what you say) and a **nonverbal part** (how you say it).

For the verbal part, you explain how counting works,

and you tell the kids that there will be a part of the new procedure that they will like and a part they will not like.

They'll not like the fact that when they do something really out of line (hitting, bad language, disrespect), they'll get an automatic 3 and a longer rest period. What they will like—and they really will!—is the fact that when they come out of their rest period, the problem will NOT be discussed anymore. Kids always find that a relief. And don't worry, they'll still get the message about misbehavior.

The nonverbal portion of The Kickoff Conversation is just as important as the verbal, or content, part. *How you say* what you say to the children communicates your knowledge of the program, your commitment to it, and your determination to see it through. Always remember this: **With absolutely no training whatsoever, kids are experts at reading between the lines.** They will know right away if you are A) really in for the long haul, B) ambivalent about the new program, or C) wishy-washy. If you are in the B or C category, **don't introduce the program to your little ones until you're ready.**

After you explain the program, ask the children if they have any questions. Many kids will look at you like, "Yeah right. Mom just went to the library again and got another book on how to raise us guys." Don't worry about this attitude and don't overexplain. Your next step will be to **make believers out of your offspring with actions, not words.**

What about the four and under crowd? Try a little role-playing. Let mom play the person counting. Let dad or uncle or next-door neighbor play the part of a child acting up. Mom counts dad, dad goes for rest period, the kids laugh. They won't laugh when it's their turn to be counted! Got The Six Kinds of Testing and Manipulation memorized (Chapter 10)?

Good luck and go get 'em!



A Note About Disrespect



Parents often complain about their children being disrespectful. Major instances of disrespect can be a problem, especially if the problem is chronic. The good news is that disrespect can be counted. One caution, though: Make sure YOU don't start the Insult Bandwagon on its path. Too often, mom or dad is actually the first person to use the rude or insolent tone. The child then responds in kind and gets yelled at or disciplined. That's a pretty confusing message to a young person.
