

Whining: That Voice!

Whining is high on the list of childhood behaviors that are really, really obnoxious to parents. Some kids have developed this strategy into an art, and there are *a few youngsters who deserve academy awards for their performances!* Many parents dread saying "No" to their kids—or not giving the children what they want—simply because of the threat of the whining that will result.



Listen to these parents' comments:

- "I know my son is capable of using his words or grabbing my hand to let me know what he wants, but he still resorts to the whine!!"
- "Whining drives me bonkers, especially now that our son is 12 and thinks I'm the maid, bank, and chauffeur!"
- "It's the HIGH pitch whining voice over & over & over & over again that gets you."
- "Makes me realize how annoying I was to my parents!"

As aggravating as whining is, it can be managed. That management starts with a good understanding of where these behaviors come from, and then the use of a calm, decisive and consistent strategy.

What Causes Whining?

You don't have to search high and low to discover the causes of whining. The answer to the question goes something like this.

Good parents have two sides to them, a *warm* side and a *demanding* side. The warm part of parenting involves fun, affection and good times. The demanding part involves learning to follow rules, acquiring skills and, basically, growing up. The warm side of parenting is more friendly; the demanding side is more challenging.

You generally won't run into whining from your children when you are operating in the warm parenting mode. You will run into whining, however, when you are coming from the demanding side of the parenting equation. That's part of your job, but it often involves frustration for your youngsters.

When you ask or demand some behavior from a child, they have two choices: They can bite the bullet and cooperate or they can do what we call "test and manipulate." *Whining is a form of testing and manipulation.*

How Do Adults Reinforce Whining?

What makes whining work for kids? Whining continues—and gets worse—when moms or dads or grandparents or teachers do any of the following:



1. See whining as abnormal, horrible behavior.
2. Feel angry or guilty when the kids complain.
3. Talk, argue, yell or whine back when the kids moan.
4. Give the kids their way when the children whimper.

Four Useful Strategies for Parenting a Whiner

1. Dramatically change the way you think: Whining comes from GOOD parenting; it does not mean you did something wrong.
2. Tell your child, "Whining is for your room." Let them moan where you can't hear it.
3. Use small, reasonable consequences. For example, "For every minute you whine at me, you are going to pay me 25 cents." Keep any consequence simple, clear and short. Then no more talking.
4. Counting (from [1-2-3 Magic](#)) is perfect for whining!



Whining & Pouting Quick Reference Guide **NEW!**

Whining and pouting are high on the list of child behaviors that are super obnoxious to moms and dads. Some kids have developed these strategies into an art form! This Quick Reference Guide explains where whining and pouting come from and how parents can successfully manage them.

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