

How can I get my child to stop whining?

My daughter is constantly whining at me! Every time she calls "Moooommmeeee" ~~ I have this great desire to change my name or run and hide under the nearest bed! Please don't tell me "she'll out grow it," because if the whining continues she may not make it to her next birthday.

Think about it:

Talk about fingernails on a blackboard! Whining has got to be the ultimate in annoying childhood behavior. Because a whining child sounds worse than a frenzied siren alarm we tend to do anything to make it stop. Thus our little whiner discovers a great way to get our undivided attention.

NEVER EVER respond to or give in to a whining request. Make an announcement:

"When you use your normal voice I will listen to you." Then turn your back to the whining child and make it obvious you are ignoring her by singing or reading a book out loud held in front of your face. If the child continues to whine, repeat the same sequence without engaging the child any further. (Pleading or discussing will only increase the whining.)

Help by modeling:

Help your child by modeling what it is you want to hear, "I can't understand you when you use a whining voice, please say, "Mommy, may I please have a drink."

Create an incentive:

Put a jar on the kitchen counter. Put ten nickels in it. Tell your child that every time she whines or fusses you will take a nickel out of the jar. Any nickels left over at bedtime will be hers to keep as a reward for remembering to use her "big girl voice."

Teach:

Often children aren't really aware they are whining. Have a discussion about whining and demonstrate what it sounds like. (Put on a good show!) Tell your child you want to help her remember not to whine, so every time she does you are going to put your fingers in your ears and say "yuck!" and make a funny face. That will be her signal to find her regular voice.

Time it:

Tell your child that you're going to set the timer for three minutes. She can fuss for three minutes and then she must stop. Some children will complain, "that's not enough time!" Then ask, "How much is enough, four or five minutes?" Typically, of course, five will be chosen. Make big production of setting the timer for five minutes, and announce that she must stop when the timer rings. Most kids will stop before the timer rings. If your persistent whiner doesn't stop after five minutes, you can put her in time out, or put yourself in time out, until the fussing ends.

Make sure you aren't giving whining lessons. Such as, "Will Youuu Pleezee Stop Whyyy Niingg! It's driving me Craaazeee!"

Praise! Praise your child's attempts at using a regular voice. "Ariel, I really enjoy hearing your pleasant voice!" Try to say "yes" to a request made in a regular, polite voice.

For example, if your child normally whines about having a cookie after lunch, and today she asks pleasantly, try to give her at least a piece of a cookie to reward her for her appropriate manners. Make sure you tell her that's why you said okay, "Yes, you may have a cookie. I'm saying yes because you asked in such a nice voice and you didn't whine about it. Lucky you!"