

# Better Parenting: Never Argue with Your Kids

By Sonia Spackman MA, MFT

Arguing grows out of different interests. Arguing is a power struggle, a contest of wills.

**So why do you do it?** You got into a wrong way of communicating your wants. You're trying to get your child to agree with what you want. You think you need to explain your decisions to your child.

**Why do your kids do it?** They are interested in what they want. They want to point out the mistakes in your reasons. To them it is not about the issue, it's about getting what they want.

**When does it go bad?** After ONE minute, since it is a contest of wills. When you are not the one asking the "why" question. There is never a good reason for parents to argue with their kids! NEVER, DON'T DO IT!

**What makes you do it then?** Because you believe your kids should understand your reasons. You believe you should explain your reasons. You believe when your kids see your reasoning they will instantly agree and be happy about it.

**What should you do instead?**  
**#1 Set Limits:** Give your reasons, do not argue. Say: "Here are my reasons, one..., two..., three... and say: "I don't feel right about it." Add: "And my decision is final." To curb further hassles go to the next step.

**#2 Give Empathy:** Say: "I understand. I imagine I would be disappointed too, if I were in your place. Just the same the decision is final." If your child continues arguing, go to the next step.

**#3 Give Choices:** Say: "This is the final word; any more hassles will result in consequences." And then give your child two options, make sure that either one will work fine for you. For example: "What would be best for you, to be fun to be with here or find another appropriate place to be?" "Would you rather be fun to be with here or find another appropriate place to be?" "You may be fun to be with here or find another appropriate place to be." You are saying the same thing with a different phrase; choose the one that is most comfortable for you. If your child does not choose or decides to do something you do not like, then you choose.

**What should you not expect and what should you expect?** Do NOT expect: that your kids will understand or that your kids will agree-or that your kids will be happy about it. DO expect: your child will not understand your concerns-and your child does not have the advantage of your experiences in life-that in life we all are sometimes required to follow decisions we don't like or understand.

**Why then do my kids STILL argue with me?** 1. Kids get to put off doing what they are told. 2. Kids want to talk you out of your decision. 3. Kids want to bargain for a better deal. 4. Whoever is asking the "why" question is in control. 5. Kids cause a hassle so you will give in. 6. Kids enjoy the contest of wills with you. 7. Kids make you suffer first. 8. Kids expose your objections to argue longer and its fun sometimes.

**What can stop this arguing?**

Things you can try to stop the arguing:

**1. THE SPONGE** Gather information. YOU become the one who asks "why". When your child begs and pleads, ask: "Why should I let you?" and "Why do you think you need this?" And "Tell me more about it." You might ask your child to write out all the reasons and bring you a list. Gather his/her entire argument so they will use their energy thinking and feel more heard, and say: "No, you can't, but thanks for asking." or "I am sure it would be fun, but the answer is no."

**2. THE BROKEN RECORD** Acknowledge your child's wants. Say: "I understand that..."

If your child continues to protest use the words nevertheless, regardless, in spite of that. For example: Child: "That's a stupid reason." You: "Honey, it may be stupid but nevertheless the answer is no." Child: "It's not fair." You: "Regardless of if it is not fair or not, the answer is no." Or you can repeat over and over again: "I love you too much to argue." And if you need to, give choices again.

**3. ZERO TOLERANCE** Do not allow ANY harassment. If you do, you are teaching your child to mistreat you. This is a boundary issue. You need to set clear boundaries. Say: "I am your mother/father, when you are disrespectful you will have consequences."

**4. DELAYED CONSEQUENCES** Immediate consequences are usually better than delayed consequences. However; if you don't know what to do or if you are angry you may make a poor

decision. Delayed consequences will give you time to think of a consequence or talk to someone to get help. It is important that you do not let things get out of hand. Stop justifying your decisions or you will make things worse. If your child gets angry, makes threats or follows you, say: "I am going to have to give you a consequence for this but don't worry about it right now." Then add: "I will be discussing this with you (then state a time that is convenient for YOU. Then stop talking immediately, stop eye contact, slowly turn your face in another direction and walk away slowly.) You want to guide your child in love and not do anything that will hinder the relationship you and your child have.

*Resources: Dr. James Jones, American Parenting Institute, Jim Fay, Cline/Fay Institute.*

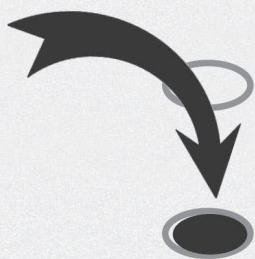
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**Next Vernonia Area Chamber of Commerce Meeting**  
will be held at  
**Grey Dawn Gallery**  
879 Bridge St.  
**Tuesday, May 13**  
at 6:30 PM



**Vernonia Area Chamber of Commerce**

## JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT POSITION 3



XXXXXXX X XXXXT  
Incumbent

**Agnes Petersen**

**Write-in**

Practicing law in Columbia County for 53+ years.

**WRITE-IN** for experience and qualifications.

**VOTE AGAINST AGE DISCRIMINATION!**

**AGNES PETERSEN**

- Life long in Columbia County, Oregon.
- Graduated from St. Helens High school in 1953, University of Oregon law school in 1959.
- Practicing law in St. Helens, OR for 53+ years.
- Admitted to practice before US Supreme Court, US District Court of Appeals 9th Circuit, US District Court of Oregon, Oregon Supreme Court and all Oregon Courts.
- Served as elected member of Columbia River PUD, St. Helens Port Commission, St. Helens School Board, Columbia Education Service District and Oregon State Bar Board of Governors.
- Served on Oregon Judicial Fitness Commission (Commission that reviews judges' conduct).

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