

Break the Vicious Circle

It's a vicious circle, you tell your child to do something, he refuses, he creates, you get upset, your child get upset, he still refuses, he creates more, you get upset more, in the end you do the task yourself to keep the peace and your sanity!

What you need to remember is that children are very good at pressing our buttons. They seem to know exactly what makes us tick. Remember the moment you get into an argument your child has won the battle of upsetting you. By instigating this confrontational behaviour your child knows you will eventually reward him by doing the task yourself.

To stop this vicious circle change needs to happen.

The first important change is to stop arguing. As soon as you notice that you are so angry you want to argue, stop and put some distance between you and your child. Tell your child you will deal with him later and that you need to calm down. Go into a different room, read a magazine, have a cuppa..... Do something to calm down.

Think about the way you communicate with your child. You want to teach your child to make choices. By giving your child choices you will put responsibility back on his shoulders instead of on your shoulders E.g. If you want your son to put his clothes away. You could command he picks his clothes up by saying 'Pick you clothes up NOW.' By using this controlling language you are inviting conflict. If you were to say 'You need to pick your clothes up sometime before dinner and put them in the laundry then you can go out to play.' By changing your language you will be encouraging your child to take responsibility and to make choices. If your child does not pick his clothes up then he has chosen not to go out and play. This type of communication is much calmer and does not invite conflict. If your child does get confrontational, calmly state 'You didn't pick your clothes up so you can't go out to play. Discussion over' and walk away.



Jean Burton
Parent Support Adviser