

MY PARENT IS SO SMART

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Believe it or not, it's possible to train your kids to appreciate how smart you are. All it takes is a little nerve on your part, and application of a Love and Logic® Five-Step Process. Look for opportunities to do this as often as possible. The more you repeat the process, the more your kids will marvel at both your wisdom and your ability to know ahead of time what's going to happen.

Start out by corralling your tendencies to say, "Don't do that!" This tempting phrase only results in kids thinking, "My parents worry too much. Nothing bad will happen." I have been studying kids and parents for over 45 years. My experience is kids who hear, "Don't do that," consider it a challenge, not good advice.

Step One: Avoid the natural tendency to order your child to do the right thing. Say these words instead, "Oh, I don't think I'd do that." Be sure there is plenty of lilt in your voice. Kids always listen best when the parent's words are soft and melodious.

Step Two: Describe the possible consequences that might befall **you**, not the child. For example, "Oh, I don't think I'd go out there and mouth off to people who are bigger than me. If I did that, I might really take a beating."

Step Three: Resist all temptations to warn or remind. Remember that bumps and bruises heal quickly. They also hurt the parent more than they do the child. Chances are the neighborhood kids will be more than willing to provide both training and natural consequences. Guaranteed, these kids will not use warnings and lectures to get the job done.

This is probably the most difficult step for some parents. It means having to override natural loving instincts to protect and defend our young. This natural instinct was given to us to use in life and death situations. Try not to confuse these times with those in which life's important lessons can be learned.

Love and Logic parents know that kids learn best through their mistakes and consequences. Experience, not lectures and warnings, develop strong people. Those who are protected from struggles and mistakes as youngsters have a much more difficult life as adults. Often, in our zeal to make our kids happy, we actually steal away their opportunities to grow into happy, productive adults.

Step Four: Know that your youngster may mouth off to those bigger kids anyway. The odds are good the other kids will provide an immediate lesson. More than likely, it will happen just like you described in step two. POW!

At this minute, a flash of recognition will surge through your child's brain. "Wow! This is exactly what mom/dad said would happen. She/he must really be smart!" When kids develop these kinds of thoughts, they remember them forever.

Step Five: Now is the time for a hug and genuine empathy. It's the perfect chance for you to be the good guy. "Oh, no. Look what happened. That's exactly what happens to me when I mouth off to bigger people. Let's get you cleaned up. I'll bet you could use a hug." This empathy locks in the learning. Look for opportunities for kids to learn in this way, and you will become smarter in their eyes with each new experience.

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