

Tips On Dealing With An *Interrupting* Child

Children crave their parents' attention. But they sometimes want it at inappropriate times. Every parent who has ever been constantly interrupted during a phone call can attest to this.

It takes patience to teach your child that sometimes your attention is needed elsewhere.

Help your child understand that interruptions will not work with these strategies:

1

Do not respond. One of the best ways to teach your child that interrupting a conversation is off-limits is by not shifting your attention to him or her. Look your child in the eye and in a firm voice say, "I'll be with you when I am finished." Then turn away.

2

Explain when interruptions should occur. Help your child understand that in the case of *emergencies* to get your attention immediately.

3

Keep your child nearby but engaged. Allow your child to choose how he or she will play quietly near you while you talk.

4

Provide information. Explain as often as it takes that it is *rude to interrupt* your conversations with another adult. Help your child understand that this behavior keeps you from getting something done.

5

Give a non-verbal signal for your child to use. Tell your child to squeeze your arm or pat your back to indicate you are needed. Respond with your own squeeze to let your child know you are aware he or she needs your attention, but don't end the conversation.

7

Create a "reset" space. Teach your child that interruptions, including whining, have consequences. When either action occurs, take your child to a "designated space" until you're finished with your conversation.

6

Take your calls in another room. By physically removing yourself, you help your child understand you are not available during phone conversations.



Work with your child to help him or her understand that *interruptions are rude to you and the person you talk to and can wait unless something serious is happening.*



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800-Children (800-244-5373) Parent Helpline