

The bright side of blunders: Why we should let kids fail

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Once of the hardest places to let our kids fail is at school, and yet it's one of the most important places for them to take charge of their own success. When students learn how to manage their own academics, they'll set themselves up well for the future, but letting kids "sink or swim" can be terrifying—for parents! But don't worry: even while handing over the reins, you can bolster your child's efforts by offering the right kind of support.

First, set the expectation that school performance is your kids' responsibility, not yours. Then, teach them to recognize the signs of struggling, and help them think of ways to get more help if they need it—such as visiting a homework help center after class or studying for a test with a friend. While it's their job to talk to the teacher if they have issues with grades or decisions, you can help them prepare by

Are you Parenting Your Kids or Bullying them??

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Not accepting them for who they are—Kids are unique human beings. They have minds, spirits, and personalities that are uniquely theirs. So often parents don't allow their children to express their individuality for fear of what society will think or because of their own set of rules or standards. If you have a son who wants to take a dance class and you tell them that isn't "manly" you aren't letting them be themselves. If your family has religious beliefs and your child questions them only to be told they are wrong, you are not letting them discover their own spiritual path. If your child wants to express their creativity through their dress, their hair color, or the way they decorate their room why not let them? Why not let them know that you are accepting of them, who they are, and the path they take in life. There are ways of guiding your kids, of helping them become their best self and still giving them their freedom to be their own person!



Telling them "What they are"—

"You are so difficult!"

"Why are you so bad!?"

4 Reasons Why Bad Marriages Are Worse for Kids Than Divorce....Continued from page 6.

Zoe's Story

Zoe, a shaggy-haired thirteen-year-old with sad eyes, glares at me, arms folded and jaw set; a therapy hostage if I ever say one. Parents exert their executive power when it comes to therapy, so I don't expect Zoe to cooperate, especially during our first tumultuous session. To kids like Zoe, therapy is an insult.

Zoe, however, offers me a deal: "I'll be in therapy with you only if you promise on thing. I want you to convince my parents to get divorced." I was flabbergasted by her request, but it opened my eyes to something I had never considered— the positive side of divorce.

role-playing the scenario ahead of time. If your kids do poorly, allow them to experience the consequences— the fallout will teach them more than any pop spelling quiz ever could. Encourage them to develop a plan to improve their grades, but keep the responsibility for the effort in their hands. While their school careers will have ups and downs, they can be proud of the fact it's their grades getting them into the college they've dreamed of— not yours. And if they aren't accepted? There's a lesson in that, too.

While we will always want the best for our children, we can't protect them forever. They'll deal with disappointment and failure their whole lives— so teaching them to negotiate these tough experiences early on will ultimately set them up to make good decisions when it really matters. They'll be able to confidently guide their own future— and isn't that the true meaning of success?

"Why can't you behave?"

"What is the matter with you?"

Stop and think about those statements...really think about them. Our children hear what we say to them, they take it to heart. Our words become their inner voice. What is a child who is told they are difficult or bad going to grow up thinking about themselves? What about the child who questions things, and wants to know why and they are told "because I said so" or to be quiet. Are you killing their curiosity, are you diminishing their independent thinking? Are you saying things that are going to build them up or tear them down? A child who is told they are difficult enough is going to strive to their full potential. Watch your words, watch what you are putting into your child's mind and if you can't say something nice don't say anything!

Shifting your approach as a parent can change your relationship with your child. You have the power to let them find their voice, feel good about themselves, and know that no matter what they are loved.

By Krista—<http://werefarmfromnormal.com/2017/07/parenting-child-bullying.html>

Zoe suffered ongoing humiliation in public, in school, and in front of her friends due to her parents' combative relationship. The verbal abuse she witnessed her mother suffer at the hands of her father never let up. As a result, Zoe struggled with ongoing headaches, depression, and weight problems.

After meeting with her parents and witnessing their sneering contempt for each other, I understood Zoe's request. If I could barely stand them for 30 minutes, what must it be like to live with them?

Within a year after her parent's divorce, Zoe's depression lifted: She went from failing school to placing on the honor role. She also had her first boyfriend and became socially outgoing. In fact, I was amazed at how much better life became for everyone.



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FAMILY FORWARD

Volume 1, Issue 3

The bright side of blunders: Why we should let kids fail

By Amy McCreedy

We've all heard it before: Don't cry over spoiled milk. So why, when our 6-year-old accidentally empties a carton of it onto the carpet, do we want to do just that?

Other than the obvious reason, involving carpet cleaner and half an hour of our time, we parents love to see our kids succeed in all they do, whether they're learning to pour, writing a book report or competing at the state championship track meet. So we hover, prod, remind and rescue them, shoving aside any obstacle in the name of preparing them for a better future.

But do we do them a disservice in the meantime?

In fact, many of us parents are overly invested in our children's success, sacrificing the long-term lessons for the short-term achievements. When we keep our kids from failure, we rob from them the opportunity to learn from their mistakes, to develop resilience and the ability to bounce back, to feel confident taking risks and to face their problems with strength and courage.

What's more, according to child and adolescent psychologist, Dr. Jennifer Hartstein, we lead them to believe that everyone wins, or that things always work out— neither of which is true. She adds that instead of facing obstacles with creative solutions, regularly rescued kids learn to avoid them, which can increase anxiety and depression when they have to rely on themselves down the road. The positive lessons failures teach us can take a childhood, or even a lifetime, to learn— which is why it's important to start early.

However, you can teach your child that "fail" doesn't mean he's a "failure." Instead, every mistake is a chance to learn— and prepare for even bigger decisions down the road. These strategies will get you off to a great start.

1. Be a refuge for risks. Encourage risk-taking as a core family value by letting your kids know, in word and deed, that, "In our family, we take risks," and, "In our family, we make mistakes and keep trying." Your kids will feel more comfortable with new challenges, like registering AP History or auditioning for the school musical, and you will too— in fact, this could be the time to sign up for the indoor soccer league you've always wanted to try!
2. Make room for mistakes. Let it be known that failure is an expectation when we try something new. Whether your child is learning to make a sandwich, ride a skateboard or speak a new language, help her understand that slip-ups are the norm. Say, "Great, that gives you the chance to learn to do it differently next time!"
3. Highlight the lows. Introduce your kids to the likes of Oprah Winfrey, Walt Disney, Steve Jobs and Michael Jordan in a way they've never seen them before: through their failures. Emphasize the fact that even [people who are very successful] have to negotiate their share of obstacles. You can make it more personal by sharing some of your own setbacks, and talk about how you bounced back even better than before.
4. Discuss "do-overs." When your kids do fail— and they will— empathize, but don't rescue. Say, "That must have been really difficult for you!" Then add, "Knowing what you know now, what would you do differently next time?" Helping them think through their mistakes will enable them to create a better outcome down the road.

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Tips to Understand Child Psychology

Every Child has a unique personality and traits. Understanding your child's psychology plays a crucial role on guiding and nurturing your child.

1. Observance Is Crucial

- Observe what he/she eats, plays, draws, sleeps, or communicates with others.
- Notice if your child is able to adjust to changes easily or takes time to settle down.
- Not all kids have similar traits as they tend to differ in personality.
- Remember that your child has a distinctive personality.



2. Be a Friend To Your Child

- Do not let your 'parent-side' take over while having a friendly conversation with your child.
- Offer a wise judgment as a friend without blaming your child for any mistake.
- Make sure you don't spoil your kid.
- Offer sufficient space to make him understand your view.

3. Spend Time With Your Child

- Spend adequate time with your child and involve yourself in his/her life.
- The closer you get to your child, the more comfortable they will be with you.
- Your child will trust you and open up about his feelings, fears, and apprehensions.
- Listen to your child and show concern towards him/her.

4. Teach Your Child To Be Responsible

- As a parent, make your kid realize their responsibilities early in life.
- Encourage your kid, as it would make him independent.



- Praise him for being responsible.
- It would also enable your child to develop positive self-esteem.

5. Ask Your Kid's Opinion In Some Family Decision

- Ask your kid's opinion and listen to what he says.
- You must understand the idea behind the opinion of your kid rather than judging the mistakes in it.
- It makes him more responsible and confident.
- This would help him make good decisions while he grows up.

6. Keep Your Promises

- You must keep your promises to win your kid's trust.
- This will encourage your child to always be honest.
- Keeping your promises will show that you care for your kid.

7. Give Them Some Space

- Each child needs his/her space.
- Don't barge into your child's life and be a hyperactive parent.
- Allow him to enjoy activities he loves, but be around to ensure they don't go overboard.
- Let them take certain decisions, you can guide him whenever help is needed.



8. Allow Your Kid To Be A Kid

- Your kid is, after all, a child. Let him/her be.
- If he makes a mistake, let him learn from it.
- Don't have too many expectations.
- Tell him in a gentle way to be careful instead of banning an activity altogether.

9. Understand Fears Or Apprehensions Of Your Kid

- Don't label your child as a troublemaker or timid. Respect his fears.
- Try and figure out the real issue that is bothering him.
- Help him overcome the fear by digging deeper and finding out the cause of his fear.

10. Indulge In A Creative Activity With Your Kid

- Creativity can influence your child's psychology in a positive way.
- Dedicate time and involve him in a creative activity he loves like arts, crafts, or playing.
- Hang up his artwork on the wall or frame it for your living room display to encourage him further.
- This would build your child's self-esteem and help him concentrate more on his creative activities.



Childhood Psychological Disorders

- Learning Disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autistic Disorder
- Conduct Disorder
- Anxiety Disorder
- Anorexia Nervosa
- Substance Addiction
- Major Depression and Bipolar Disorder

These tips will help you make necessary amends to establish a healthier bond with your kids while also contributing to their overall emotional development.

To read the full article please visit: www.momjunction.com

Child Therapist's List of Top Worries by Age

All kids have fears. Your baby may panic if a stranger picks her up. Your toddler may be afraid of dogs. Your third grader may get a stomachache the day he's starting a new school. But some kids worry a lot more than others. It's always painful to watch a child suffer from anxiety, but it's especially difficult if you're not sure whether she's worrying too much and might need help. The difference between normal worry and an anxiety disorder is severity. Although feeling anxious is a natural reaction to a stressful or dangerous situation, a child may need help if his anxiety is out of proportion, if it persists, or if it interferes with his life and healthy development.

Age 2-4 Years Old

- Fear of the potty
- Fear of the dark
- Fear of shadows
- Fear of sleeping alone
- Fear of weather
- Fear of loud noises



Age 5-7 Years Old



- Fear of the dark
- Fear of fire
- Fear of bad guys
- Fear of taking tests
- Fear of peer rejection
- Fear of doctors & shots
- Fear of bugs & animals

Age 8-11 Years Old

- Fear of bad guys & ghosts
- Fear of being home alone
- Fear of dying
- Fear of sickness
- Fear of school failure
- Fear of throwing up at school
- Fear of peer rejection



Ages 12-18 Years Old

- Fear of their safety
- Fear of sickness
- Fear of throwing up at school
- Fear of failure in school or in sports
- Fear of school presentations
- Fear of how they look to others
- Fear of violence and global issues



Age 18-20 Years Old

- Fear of germs & health
- Fear of being homeless
- Fear of death
- Fear of academic performance
- Fear of romantic rejection
- Fear of life purpose
- Fear of being an adult



www.anxioustoddlers.com

"When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it's our job to share our calm, not join their chaos."

-L.R. KNOST

The Gottman Institute

Age Appropriate CHORES FOR KIDS

AGES 4-5



PUT FOOD IN PET BOWLS



PICK OUT & MATCH SOCKS IN CLEAN LAUNDRY PILE



COLLECT TRASH TO TAKE OUT

HELP WITH RECYCLING



AGES 6-9

AGES 10-14

SET THE TABLE



LOAD & UNLOAD THE DISHWASHER



LAUNDRY



LAWN WORK



OLDER TEENS

sheknows

4 Reasons Why Bad Marriages Are Worse for Kids Than Divorce

When marriages turn toxic, divorce can actually help kids.

By: Sean Grover

When I was a kid, divorced parents were given the evil eye. Heads shook, tongues clicked; divorcees were homewreckers, selfish and unloving, they destroyed children's lives. Some churches banned them from services—apparently, even God wasn't a fan. The message to married couples: Keep your family intact by any means necessary.

Times have changed; today, nearly half of all marriages in the U.S. end in divorce. Whether divorce hurts or helps children depends on how it is handled by their parents, but one thing is certain: Staying in a toxic marriage is certain to cause children more damage than good.

Kids forced to endure loveless marriages and to tolerate emotional tension day after day bear the full brunt of their parents' dysfunctional relationship. They intuitively feel their parents' unhappiness, and sense their coldness and lack of intimacy. In many cases, children blame themselves, feeling their parents' combative relationship is somehow their fault. In such cases, staying together "for the kids" is a cruel joke.

Here are four ways kids suffer through gloomy and despondent marriages:

- 1. Chronic Tension**—Our parents' relationship leaves an emotional imprint on us that never fades. A natural part of children's development is internalizing both their parents. When parents are consistently at odds, their kids internalize those conflicts. Rather than feeling soothed or comforted when they are both parents, they feel tense. Such ongoing tension can produce serious emotional, social, and physical ailments in children, such as depression, hopelessness, or chronic fatigue.
- 2. An Unstable Sense of Self**—James Dean cried out to his bickering parents in *Rebel Without a Cause*, "Stop it! You're tearing me apart!" because the war between parents does take root inside children's minds. The strain eats away at their security and leaves them with little internal peace, putting them at odds with their own impulses. For example, they long to be loved, but reject closeness; they yearn for friends, but choose isolation; they will have great intellectual or creative abilities, yet sabotage their own efforts. The external conflict between their parents eventually becomes an internal battle with themselves that complicates their life and hinders their emotional development.
- 3. Fear of Intimacy**—Children raised by battling parents have great difficulty getting close to others. Intimacy triggers the traumas they suffered when witnessing their parents' dysfunction, so they avoid closeness to steer clear of getting hurt. If they manage



to establish an intimate relationship, they remain cautious or guarded. When conflict arises, they're most likely to flee or to reenact their parents' conflicts with their own partner.

- 4. Mood Problems**—Warring parents produce children who struggle with serious mood problems, such as dysthymia. These problems, if left untreated, may fuel personality disorders or substance abuse. At the root of these problems is a profound lack of hope. They learn at an early age to abandon optimism and expect the worst. Sadly, bad marriages cause kids to mature too quickly and lose out on their childhood.

Before You Consider Divorce

Ending a marriage is a brutal undertaking that should only be an option after all other efforts have been exhausted. Before you call your lawyer, here are a few suggestions:

- Couples Counseling**—Couples counseling works best when it teaches parents how to work through their conflicts without resorting to emotional warfare. It also gives ill-tempered parents a place to work through their differences rather than exposing their kids to them. The goal of couple's therapy is to enrich communication and enhance intimacy. But be warned: Couples therapy can be treacherous, and the wrong therapist can spell doom for your marriage. Gather trustworthy recommendations, take your time, and interview several professionals. Make sure you both agree on the therapist you choose; otherwise, the therapy will become just another bone of contention.
- Individual Therapy**—Nothing stirs up unresolved childhood issues like marriage. Too often, couples have unrealistic expectations of marriage, and become disillusioned when they discover that good marriages take work. Before you blame all the problems in your marriage on your partner, get some help for yourself. A skilled therapist can help you identify problems from your past that are resurfacing in your relationship.
- Support Groups**—The best outcome of group work comes from sharing your feelings and discovering that you're not alone. Hearing about other couples' struggles, the difficulties they face, and how they work through them can bring much-needed inspiration and relief. It also provides you with a community of people who can inspire you with new choices in your marriage.

Looking for marriage education sessions?

Contact Alexis Cordova at 936.334.3230 or by email at acordova@ag.tamu.edu.

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Are you Parenting Your Kids or Bullying them??

Being a parent is tough. Raising kids to be respectful and kind starts with how we treat them and sometimes we need to step back and check our approach. In this world where bullying is an epidemic, and kids are learning more and more how to be mean and hurtful it's time we take a good look at what we are teaching them at home. Are the approaches we're using really parenting or are they bullying?

I'm a big believer that our children shouldn't be taught to fear us they shouldn't behave because they don't want to incur our wrath. They should behave because they know they are capable of being good, they want to make us proud, they want to be proud of themselves and feel good about who they are.

I'm also a big believer in not judging other parents, I know that each of us is doing our best and working with the skill set we have. However, there is a distinct possibility that there isn't anyone in your life who is going to point out you might be being a little too harsh. You might not see the habits you learned from your parents or society as detrimental. You might even think that because the approach gets the results you're looking for that it is a good one...But is it?

I think a good barometer for if how you're approaching your kids is acceptable is to ask the question to yourself "Would I treat an adult this way?" or ask yourself, "What if someone else treated my child this way?" If you wouldn't say what you are saying to your child to another adult chances are that it isn't a respectful, positive way to speak to them. If someone else treated your child in the way you are and it would upset you then obviously it isn't the best approach.

It's hard to change parenting habits, it's hard to change our thinking and our actions but identifying harmful behaviors is the first step. The fact is, that most parents are doing their best, want to raise happy healthy children, and are motivated by their love of their kids. But we must start realizing that kids are people. They don't deserve to be treated like they are stupid, or can't make decisions, we can't minimize their opinions or not care what they have to say. We need to treat them like the important people that they are, raise them in a positive way that makes them feel good about themselves, because that inner confidence and self-love translates into the way they look at the world around them, and ultimately how they treat other people.

So let's check ourselves, shall we? Let's ask the question about some common parenting behaviors...is this really parenting, or is it bullying?



Yelling— Yep, we've all done it. You just cleaned the kitchen and your child comes walking through covered in mud. You have told them 150 gazillion times to put their shoes on it's time to go...It is par for the course of parenting. However, those times when you lose it should be few and far between. They should be super rare occasions where the fact that you are only human comes out for a minute; you regain your composure and then apologize and speak to your child with kindness. If you are constantly

yelling at your child there is one huge fact you are relaying to them...**You are out of control.** The moment your voice starts to raise, that you can't control your own vocal chords, you are showing your kid that when you are angry, frustrated, or upset that the thing to do is to lose it. When we show kids this on a regular basis guess what they're going to do? Mirror it right back at us.

It will rear its ugly head in the form of tantrums, talking back, hitting and yelling at their siblings. The unfortunate part is that those behaviors will probably get them yelled at. Yelling can be hard habit to break. But would you yell at your boss or coworker? Would you yell at a friend who upset you? Start by telling yourself that it is unacceptable and you want to change your approach. Then start pausing before you react, take a deep breath, control your reaction. You'll be surprised how your reaction can diffuse an unpleasant situation quickly and easily if you don't yell and contribute to the drama.

Saying, "You're going to make me mad" -...Really?? There's a pretty famous guy that says something similar, You won't like me when I'm angry," then he turns really big and green and wreaks



havoc on the world around him. When you think about it looking at your child and threatening them with your anger is pretty much hulking out on them. What does that mean, "you're going to make me mad?" You are basically implying that your anger is something to be feared and that is why your child should behave. Is that really your goal? Do you want your kid to be afraid of you and fear your anger? Is that something you're proud of?

Check your emotions, calm yourself, and correct your child's behavior out of love and self-control instead of anger. When you start to curb your anger in favor of a more positive and loving approach your child will want to behave, they won't try your patience because it no longer gets a reaction. Don't let the Hulk even peek his head out!



Setting them up for failure— There is a certain mom I know who gives her children massive amounts of chores. She'll have them scheduled for multiple activities during the day and only leave a little bit of time in the evening to get those chores done. Then if they don't? They're punished. I have seen other parents yell or punish their kids for doing something when the child clearly had no idea that they shouldn't be doing it. Any time we set up scenarios where our kids are bound to fail whether it is time, their capability, or their lack of knowledge and we punish them for it that is nothing but a show of power. We are saying to the child, "I don't care what the circumstances are even if I set them up against you, I have the power here." Think about it as an adult, if you were pulled over for speeding and there were no speed limit signs posted you would present your case in court. If your boss piled your desk with 5 hours' worth of work 1/2 hour before quitting time you would know there was not way you could get it all done. Punishing our kids for being in a situation that sets them up for failure, and knowing that we are the ones that put them there shows them that our priority is the ability to punish.

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The Road to Responsible Spending: Teaching Kids About Money

Money, spending, and saving can be difficult concepts for children to understand and not all children are exposed to financial literacy in school. Parents aren't always sure when or how to start talking about money with their kids, but they can make learning about money fun, while also building a foundation of good financial skills that are vital to a child's successful future.

AGES 3-5

At this age parents should start preparing children to save money for purchases and start teaching children about basic banking functions. Kids can understand patience and saving money versus spending. They can also start learning numbers and counting.

Children at this age won't be able to grasp complex financial concepts, but working with them now will set the stage for later.

- Play store with fake money, pretending to buy and sell goods.
- Learn to identify money by playing matching games with bills and coins.
- Assign your children small, daily chores and agree to a weekly "allowance" for their hard work.
- When they get their allowance help them put it in a piggy bank, counting it together each week.
- Take your child to the store and tell them they can pick out one thing. Talk about the pros and cons of each item they would like to buy and help them make a decision to pick just one item.

AGES 6-8

At this age parents should begin teaching basic money concepts such as earning money, spending habits, paying bills, making purchases, etc. Kids can add and subtract and begin logical thinking.

School-age children can begin to understand that money is finite and that it's important for your family to make smart financial choices.

- Create Save, Spend, Give jars, and divide up all of their money received from chores or gifts into each of these categories.

- Have them set a goal for something they would like to purchase. Then help them figure out how much they need to save each month in order to reach that goal.
- Take them shopping. Let them choose items, talk about your budget, and discuss ways that you try to save money, such as using coupons and buying generic brands.
- Talk about the difference between wants and needs, giving examples and discussing choices while you're in the store.
 - Help them understand that we have to work to earn money. Talk about what they want to be when they grow up and give them details about your job.

AGES 9-12

At this age parents should teach children about taxes, inflation, interest, loans, and time horizon. Kids should start applying learned skills as well as begin abstract thinking.

Older kids can begin to understand the importance of earning money and making long-term goals.

- Take them to the bank and let them open a savings account.
- Explain how debit and credit cards work, emphasizing that it's money that is coming out of your bank account or money that you will have to pay back.
- Have a garage sale and let your child help determine the value of the objects for pricing, and let them keep the money from the sale of their old items.
- When shopping, discuss why you are choosing certain items, particularly when it comes to quality. Teach them how to research the items they want to buy and how to make informed decisions.

AGES 13-15

At this age parents should help teens understand that their financial choices will affect their future and can begin teaching them about the stock market and more advanced financial topics.

Teens have improved reasoning skills and are better at understanding abstract ideas. They also understand cause and effect.

Teenagers can begin to take on additional responsibility and begin making some of their own financial decisions.

- Help them set up a monthly budget for all of their expenses and compare it to their monthly income.
- Talk about ways to save money on the things they want such as using coupons, buying vintage, etc.
- Teach them about the stock market. Ask them to choose a stock and talk about its ups and downs in price.

AGES 16 & UP

At this age parents should prepare their teen for a solid financial future. Teens are influenced by their peers and develop mature relationships. They seek control over their lives and increased independence.

As your teens move into adulthood, they will face some major financial decisions such as paying for college, building their credit, budgeting, paying bills, and more.

- Help them understand the importance of maintaining a job for consistent income.
- Discuss the importance of credit scores and using credit cards responsibly.
- Consider getting them a prepaid credit card or open up a basic checking account to acclimate them to using plastic.
- Start researching college and the expected costs.

Students from states where a financial education course was required are more likely to display positive financial behaviors and dispositions.

For more information on how to teach your kids about money and for fun activities and pintables, visit CompareCards' Education Center at www.comparecards.com/education

Helping Kids Kick the "Helpless" Habit

By Amy McCreedy

Empowering Your Child to be Capable of Self-Sufficient

Fellow parents...raise your hand if you ever feel the overwhelming sense of irritation when your child asks you (maybe for the fifteenth time) to do something he or she can totally do for themselves. Is your hand up in the air? Take comfort— you're not alone!

All families deal with helplessness from time to time. If feigned helplessness is a once-in-a-blue moon occurrence at your house-no big deal. We all have our moments! However, if your child acts helpless on a daily basis for things he can and should be doing for himself, it's time to put the brakes on that behavior!

The type of helplessness we need to reign in is when kids ask (demand, whine for) us to do things they are perfectly capable of doing for themselves. Depending on the age of your child, it might be something like, "Daaaad, I need you to 'butter my bread', 'tie my shoe', or 'get me a juice box.'"

You know they can do it. They know they can do it. They are choosing to act helpless to keep you at their beck and call— to get you to jump through hoops to meet their whims and demands. This kind of helplessness is called Special Service and it's a classic power struggle. It's not only aggravating— it creates unrealistic expectations for your child that their every wish will be granted, and that's not healthy for anyone!

You might be thinking, "What's wrong with helping our kids, Amy?" Rest assured, there's nothing wrong with helping one another when needed. A family is a team and we have each other's backs. However, when "helplessness" is really a demand for Special Service, the child is manipulating the parent for attention or power.

How do you know if it's Special Service or just a normal request?

Simple: Your gut will tell you. Here's an example: You are standing next to the silverware drawer and your daughter says, "Mom, can you grab a spoon for me?" You say, "sure" and hand her a spoon. No big deal. It's perfectly reasonable request.

Example two: You are busy packing lunches and you let your daughter know it's time to leave in 5 minutes. She breaks into a chorus of "Moooooooom, I need you to help me get dressed! I can't do it." You KNOW she can do it. You've seen her do it. She is playing the helpless card to get the attention and power hit of a "special service" request.

In the spoon example—it was a perfectly reasonable request and there was no emotion involved. In the getting dressed example, you felt annoyed in the moment because you KNOW she is ACTING helpless and now you're ticked. It's the gut feeling that tells you it's special service.

That irritated feeling is your gut's way of telling you to activate your parenting superpowers and not give in to demands that your kids can, and should, do themselves. Instead?

Put these four strategies in place:

- **Take time to train your child to do the task all by themselves.** Remember, marketing is everything so position the training in a positive light. "Sweetie, the past few mornings, you seemed to have trouble when getting dressed/putting on your shoes, etc. Let's take a few minutes to practice so you know exactly what to do tomorrow morning." Train her on the how-to's and role play it.
- **Set the expectation:** "You are growing up in so many ways and from now on —YOU are going to be responsible for _____. I know you can do it!"
- **Walk away.** If they pull the helpless card in the moment, be totally unimpressed and walk away! With a smile on your face, simply say, "I'm confident you can handle it. I'll be downstairs when you're ready for breakfast." (The exit is essential. If you stay in the room, you're sure to get sucked right back into the power struggle.)
- **If time is of the essence, include the task as part of a When-Then Routine:** "I'm confident you can do it, honey. WHEN you are dressed, THEN we'll have breakfast. But remember the kitchen closes at 7:30. See you downstairs!" It works like a dream.

Will your kids try to pull the helpless card again? Most likely, they will! After all, acting helpless has worked for them in the past!

However, with practice and consistency on your part, they'll get the point that you won't jump through hoops at their every whim and demand.

In short order, your kids will feel empowered because they will become more and more capable (at something other than manipulating mom or dad)! You'll feel empowered that your kids are learning to manage their own tasks in addition to you getting a much deserved break! (Go you!)

*Only 22 states require a high school course in economics
*Only 17 states require a high school course in Personal Finance
*A mere 5 percent of students claim to have learned about money from an educator.

High school graduates from states that require personal finance education have higher savings rates and net worth.