

DISENGAGING DEFIANCE

It really is a kid's job to defy us. They have to. It is not a sign of poor parenting or "bad" kids. It is the way they pull away from us and establish themselves as independent, self sufficient. It may be "normal" for them to defy us, but it is not okay. They are free to disagree, not disobey. Disobedience carries consequences, in the work place, in the community, in school and home is where they should learn that first.

We all get caught in the verbal wars, arguing to make our point. We hope, we actually believe we will convince them to understand and see things our way. No way. 99% of the time it will not work. (probably it is 100%, but nothing is absolute). **Explaining promotes more arguing.**

1. Avoid arguing: go brain dead: these will let them know you will NOT debate or reason with them (all in a matter-of-fact tone; they will try to hook you with a "zinger;" don't bite the hook)
 - ✓ "good try"
 - ✓ "could be so"
 - ✓ "thanks for letting me know what you are thinking/feeling"
 - ✓ "sorry you feel that way"
 - ✓ "I see"

Use the phrase and STOP there. Arguing will start to lessen. These phrases will calm the emotions. You can discuss it later when everyone is calm.

2. Cool it with the 3 P's
 - Predict: you know your kids. They are predictable. You know what to expect based on their past behavior.
 - Prepare: if you have a plan in mind you will be calmer; you also will not be caught by surprise and have to think on your feet.
 - Prevent: often you will be able to prevent a behavior simply by anticipating it and planning. When you think this way you will start to discover ways to redirect the behavior before it is a problem.
3. More choices: the basis of arguments and defiance is asserting independence. Giving more choices can offset the defiance and support independence. "you need to take the garbage out before your favorite TV show; you decide when." "Homework needs to be done before bedtime; once it is 8PM the books get closed. You decide when you are best able to do it." "You can wear the red shirt, the blue shirt or the plaid—you pick."
4. Never tell a child the lesson they just learned. We do this hoping to further support their learning. BUT this really backfires. If someone did this to you, would you be appreciative?