



## **Backtalk**

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### **You Can't Make Me!**

**Backtalk is a natural part of growing up-another way of testing limits.**

#### **Try to find humor in the situation.**

If you can keep your sense of humor, backtalk will be just one more of those annoying things kids do, and not the end of the world.

#### **Who Me?**

Does your child sound like anyone you know? Without meaning to, we can be our child's best teacher in the art of disrespectful communication. Practice giving what you want to get.

#### **Battle Weary?**

If so, maybe you need to pick your battles more carefully. When confronted with backtalk, ask yourself: "Am I willing to go to the wall on this one?" If not, save your thunder for something really important.

#### **Not Another "NO!":**

It's tempting to use "No!" as an all purpose parenting tool. "No, you can't watch that." "No, I won't take you." "No, you can't have that." Unfortunately, the indiscriminate use of "No!" tends to *encourage* backtalk. One parent put it this way: "You'll be raising this child for 18 years. Don't spend all your "nos" in one place." Choose wisely.

#### **Room to Negotiate:**

Instead of an immediate "No," buy time to have a discussion. "I need time to think it over. Why don't you come back in half an hour with all the reasons you think I should say "yes" and we'll talk about it then." Follow through with your promise and give your child your undivided attention. You may end up saying "no" anyway, though if your child feels heard and respected, the "no" will be easier to take.

#### **Timing is Everything:**

Learn to recognize when you're not able to negotiate or even listen to your child. Be honest: "We'll have better luck with this after dinner. I can't give you my best right now."

#### **Exit Stage Right:**

Remember, backtalk loves an audience. You don't have to be one. You can leave during the first act. And, don't stick around for the encore.

**For more tips call the Family Help Line: 800.932.4673**