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Constantly Out-Negotiated By Kids? Here's What You Need to Know



If there's one thing that kids seem to pick up really fast, it is the fine art of negotiation. Here's what you need to know about nurturing your child's negotiation skills while tamping down on manipulative behavior -

1 Beware of the Mini-Observer in the Room

Until the age of 11 or 12 kids don't truly understand persuasive intent. Kids are however keen observers and love experimenting. Watch out for how you treat your kids and what tools you are (unintentionally) providing them.

2 Channel Your Child's Skills

Compassionate persuasion is a great life skill. Be proactive in teaching your kids how to put their negotiation skills to good use to arrive at win-win solutions.

3 Pay Attention - Is Your Child Negotiating, or Inching Towards Manipulation?

It is our role as parents to establish and maintain limits that are fair and consistent. And that extends to keeping our kids firmly on this side of the line between persuasion and manipulation.

A few situations where you should act decisively:

SITUATION	SOLUTION
<i>DIVIDE AND CONQUER.</i>	Talk with your partner. Agree on consistency. Back each other up when necessary.
<i>EMBARRASSING THE PARENTS WITH TANTRUM IN A PUBLIC PLACE.</i>	When entering a potential tantrum-zone get mentally prepared and be ready to leave on short notice.
<i>SWEETNESS AND LIGHT.</i>	Embrace and love the cuteness, but also be prepared to look beneath it and keep yourself from being hoodwinked.
<i>EXPLOITING THE MOMENT.</i>	Train yourself to be hyper-vigilant for possible negotiations when you are vulnerable.
<i>THE GUILT TRAIN.</i>	Fix what needs to be fixed without being guilt-tripped into something you wouldn't agree to otherwise.
<i>PERSISTENCE, PERSISTENCE AND, ERR, PERSISTENCE.</i>	Admire your child's tenacity, but don't give in!

4 Spot and Avoid Getting Tangled in Manipulative Negotiation

Take a deep breath and refuse to be drawn in.

5 Rein in your Inner Control Freak and Listen to your Child

Children use negotiation as a means of gaining control in their lives. Give your kids more control whenever possible, so they don't have to resort to negotiation and manipulation.