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# Love and Logic® *Insider's Club*

Helping Raise Responsible Kids Since 1977™

## Teaching Kids to Follow Directions

*Weekly Tip from the Love and Logic® Experts*



Dear Karen,

When you're asking your children to do things for you, do you ever feel like you're talking to a cat? I love my cats, even though they never listen to a thing I say.

Fortunately, children, unlike cats, respond well to the following strategies:

- **When asking your child to do something, don't forget to say "please."**  
Since we want our children to use this magic word, doesn't it make sense that we ought to model it?
- **Get close to them and use a pleasant, calm voice.**  
Few people respond favorably to being hollered at from across the room. Besides, do I want to train my kids to need yelling at, or would it be better if I taught them to respond to a calmer, quieter tone?
- **Ahead of time, have a plan for how you'll respond to noncompliance or defiance.**  
If they refuse to comply, or they dawdle about, reply, "I love you too much to fight with you about doing this. I'm going to have to do something. We'll talk about this later."  
  
Delay the consequence so that you don't find yourself in an unwinnable power-struggle.
- **Resist the urge to threaten, lecture, or give repeated warnings.**  
This is a tough tip for most of us! Just remember that when we use threats, lectures, and repeated warnings, we train our kids to need threats, lectures, and repeated warnings.
- **Allow empathy and consequences to do the teaching.**  
In our DVD, [Simple Parenting Strategies](#), we describe how to

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apply a consequence when it's tough to think of one. One powerful strategy involves having your children replace energy drained from you by their noncompliance. They can do this through extra chores, doing without some fun activities that you provide, etc.

The key, of course, is the empathy. Nothing works without it!

Thanks for reading! Our goal is to help as many families as possible. If this is a benefit, [forward it to a friend](#).

Dr. Charles Fay

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