



What to Do About Whining

Suggestions for responding to the “whines”

- **Think about the cause (for example, frustration, jealousy, fatigue, hunger, moodiness, limit testing, attention, etc.) and how you usually respond.** What works? What doesn't? Why?
- **Ask for the voice you want your child to use instead of the whiney one.** Give them an example of what a “big-kid” voice sounds like. Teach him or her how big-kid (big-boy or big-girl) voices can communicate varying emotions.
- **Notice when your child uses a big-kid voice and let them know how good it sounds.** Stop what you're doing and listen (if you don't hear them when they ask nicely, you are more likely to get the whines).
- **Ignore how annoying the whine is and listen to what is being said instead.** Trying to deal with what your child is saying will avoid putting attention on the whine.
- **Attention to the whining itself will make the whining increase.** Attention promotes behavior. If you focus only on the whining, your child will not feel heard.
- **Respond to what your child needs/wants/is saying, instead of the whining.** “I hear you telling me how hungry you are. When you tell me using that voice, I get the feeling that you're trying to tell me how hungry you are and that you can't wait until dinner to eat.” Responding calmly to what your child is feeling, instead of focusing only on the whine will decrease the whining.
- **Remind your child (calmly) why you want them to use a big-kid voice.** “When you use a whiney voice, it makes it hard for me to listen to what you are saying. But I want to hear the things that you have strong feelings about. Can you think of a different way to tell me how you're feeling?”