



STRATEGIES FOR AVOIDING NEGOTIATIONS

1. **Pick your battles!** Some things simply are not worth arguing over. If you and your child disagree on something minor, and you're willing to let your child have their way, then agree to your child's request *before* there is an opportunity for negotiations to begin. Giving in after your child has started negotiating will give your child the idea that negotiating is a good way to get what they want.
2. **Give your child choices whenever possible.** For example, your child may not be able to choose whether or not to do their homework, but they can choose whether to start with math or social studies.
3. **Set achievable goals for your child.** If something really is too hard for your child to achieve, then there's a good chance they will whine and complain and try to negotiate for a more achievable goal.
4. **Make sure that you hold firm.** When your child tries to negotiate, stick to your original plan and don't give in.
5. **Use empathy if your child becomes angry or upset.** Children often respond with frustration and anger when they experience disappointment and don't get what they want. While you should avoid giving in to your child, it can be helpful to notice and comment on the child's feelings. *For example*, replace, "It's time to go to bed and that's the rule." with, "You look disappointed (sad, mad) that it's time to get ready for bed, but remember you will be earning your points if you follow directions right away."
6. **Try to maintain a sense of humor.** When it comes to negotiations, the situation is rarely as serious as it may seem to you and your child in the moment.
7. **Take a step back and see the bigger picture.** What might be contributing to the way your child is behaving or feeling? Is your child tired, or hungry, etc.? Try to respond to the underlying issue rather than to the words your child is using.
8. **Use Planned Ignoring.** Remember, if you don't respond, your child won't have anyone to negotiate with!