

When (And How) Should You Say No?

A Quiz To Do With Your Child

Figuring out the best way to set, express, and maintain boundaries is challenging for all of us, but it can be especially challenging when you're young and learning the best ways to communicate. Pose the following questions to your child and talk about possible ways to handle these situations. We've listed some options to help you start the conversation, but feel free to come up with your own ideas or adjust them to fit your situation.

The goal is to give your child principles and tools they can use in situations where they need to kindly but firmly say no. The questions below are meant for children between 6 and 12 but can be adjusted for older or younger children.

QUESTION 1

You and your best friend are playing on your tablet when a video comes up that you know your parents wouldn't want you to watch. Your friend wants to keep watching it, but you want to turn it off. How would you handle that?

- a. Smash the tablet out of frustration.
- b. Say that you don't want to watch it, explain why, and turn the video off.
- c. Keep watching it so your friend won't think you're a loser.
- d. Run out of the room crying and never speak to your friend again.

QUESTION 2

Every time you see your grandpa, he gives you a big hug and pinches your cheek. You don't mind the hug, but you HATE the cheek pinch. How do you get him to stop?

- a. Talk to your mom and dad about it and ask them to support you. Then tell your grandpa you don't like it when he pinches your cheek, but you like his hugs.
- b. Swat his hand away the next time he tries to pinch your cheek.
- c. Tell him not to touch you or you might throw up on him.
- d. Yell loudly, "I hate it when you touch me!"

QUESTION 3

A friend asks you to come over to their house and you say yes, but as it gets closer you start to feel uncomfortable. You don't want to hurt their feelings, but it seems like a bad idea to go. How should you handle it?

- a. Ask them if you could do it another day.
- b. See if they'd like to come over to your house instead.
- c. Go anyway; you're probably just being silly.
- d. Either a or b.

QUESTION 4

Someone tells a joke on the bus that makes you uncomfortable. When you say that you didn't like it and are going to tell the bus driver, the kid who told the joke says, "You better not, or else I'll punch you!" What should you do?

- a. Say you're sorry, sit down, and hope they don't tell another joke like that one.
- b. Go tell the bus driver anyway.
- c. Wait until you get home and tell your mom or dad what happened.
- d. Both b and c.

QUESTION 5

You tell someone no, but they keep pressuring you, hoping you'll change your mind. How can you enforce your no?

- a. Push them down and kick dirt in their face.
- b. Yell, "NO INFINITY!"
- c. Tell them no again, explain your boundary, and tell them that you're not going to change your mind.
- d. Stop talking to them.

QUESTION 6

You're asked to clean your room, but you absolutely don't want to. What should you say when you're asked?

- a. Don't say anything. Just hide so no one can find you.
- b. Tell your mom or dad that you're not in the mood to do it and have a conversation.
- c. Say yes but then sit in your room and do nothing.
- d. Scream "No!" and run out of the room.

ANSWERS

1. **b)** Saying no to a friend can be difficult, but it's important that you tell them no when you feel like you should. Telling them why and asking them to respect your feelings can help them understand you.
2. **a)** Telling an adult no can be hard and sometimes they won't listen to you, so you should talk to your mom and dad and ask for their help or support. You should be able to tell someone no anytime you feel uncomfortable with something they are doing, even if they are a grown-up.
3. **d)** When you have a funny feeling about something, that's your intuition. It's not always clear why you feel like something isn't a good idea, but the more you trust your intuition, the safer you'll be. Let your friend know that you'd love to hang out with them – some other day or at some other place.
4. **d)** Sometimes "tattling" is the best way to make sure that things remain safe for everyone. The bus driver and your parents should know if something happens on the bus that shouldn't be happening, especially if your "no" isn't working.
5. **c)** When you tell someone no, you've set a boundary, letting them know what you will and won't allow. If someone pressures you to change your mind, it can be even more important for you to kindly and firmly stand your ground, even if it might make the other person sad.
6. **b)** There are some things that you have to do, even if you don't want to. When you are asked to do something like clean your room, you can say that you're not in the mood and talk to your parents about it, but chances are you're still going to have to clean it.