

Avoid Being a Vending Machine



1. Take out the words

- Nonverbal communication will help your child tune into YOU.
 - Over-emphasize your 'thinking' face when your child asks you for an item.
 - Demonstrate your situation non-verbally (look through the cupboards for food and shrug- where is it?).
 - Over-emphasize facial expressions in play.

2. Don't teach 'code'; teach communication

- 1. First, respond to what your child says with enthusiasm:
 - "You want cookies! Thank you for telling me!"
- 2. Then, explain the situation and wait before producing the requested item
 - Add a small wait period, ask your child for help, or offer an alternative:
 - "Help me get a plate for the cookie." "I bet your sister also wants cookies! Let's go get her to join us." "Hmmm (emphasize thinking face). Cookies are not available. I do have fruit cups!"
 - Older children: remind them of limits and emphasize emotional empathy and reasons why
 - "Oh no! But we don't eat desserts before lunch because we save them for our afternoon snack. I love having our treat together in the afternoon. Let's see what else we can eat now."

If your child explodes, help them through their emotions. It is difficult; you are teaching them that you respond differently now.

3. Focus on commenting instead of requests

- NO MORE than 20% of language should focus on: giving instructions, asking questions, or forcing your child to make requests.
- 80% of your focus will be on commenting to share an information.
 - "I love cookies!"
 - "I don't like that. Yuck."
 - "That feels SUPER sticky."
 - "I don't know what you want."