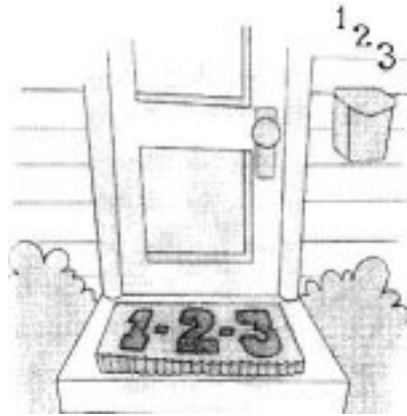


It's 1-2-3 MAGIC



Winner of the National Parenting Publications Gold Award and with over 875,000 copies sold, the 1-2-3 Magic program is a step by step guide on effective discipline for kids aged 2-12. Written by Dr. Thomas Phelan, a clinical psychologist with over 30 years experience working with children, it offers the busy parent tried and tested techniques to help raise happy, self confident kids. Parenting is done in three straightforward steps:

- 1) Controlling obnoxious behaviour: using 1-2-3 for STOP behaviour
- 2) Encouraging good behaviour: using START techniques to encourage good behaviour
- 3) Strengthening your relationship with your child

When you start the program half of children will be immediate cooperators, the other half will be immediate testers. With the “testers” – their behaviour will get worse when you first start the program as they'll want to see if you really mean business. Within 7-10 days if you CONSISTENTLY use the techniques taught here, most of these “testers” will fall into line.

Before we look at ways of changing your child's behaviour, we have to get rid of a very big myth:



KIDS ARE NOT LITTLE ADULTS!!!!

Let's face it. Kids are born unreasonable and selfish. Our jobs as parents/teachers is to turn them into responsible and considerate adults. To do this a lot of parents use words and reasoning to try and rationalize with the kid. This only leads to the TALK-PERSUADE-ARGUE-YELL-HIT syndrome.

Imagine a situation where little Johnny is yet again teasing his younger sister. You sit Johnny down and explain to him why it's wrong to tease his sister - “it upsets her feelings and how would you feel if someone teased you?” Johnny innocently looks up, blinks twice and says “Gee dad, I never thought of it like that. Thanks for explaining it to me that way. I won't do it again.” GET REAL!!! If you have a kid like that I want you to go and pour yourself a very big glass of champagne, sit down and put your feet up – you have that 1 in a million child that the rest of us dream about. For the 99.9999% of the rest of us its not going to be that simple and we are going to have to work with Johnny to change his behaviour.

The real key to parenting is to be gentle, consistent, decisive and calm. With 99% of parents who scream hit and shout, it's the parent who is actually having the temper tantrum not the kid.

Its a sign that the parent:

- a) doesn't know what to do.
- b) is so frustrated they can't see straight.
- c) the adult has anger management issues.

One explanation if REALLY necessary as to why something is wrong is fine. Too much talking from the parent only IRRITATES and DISTRACTS kids. Remember that kids have a real chip on their shoulders. Adults are bigger, stronger, more intelligent, and more skilled than their kids. It's the adults who have all the power – and that really bugs kids out. No one wants to feel unimportant. If the kid can sense he's pushing your buttons and making you all hot under the collar, suddenly HE'S the one with the power; and let me tell you that feels real good! He's not going to stop until he gets what he wants. The key? The parents need to follow the NO TALKING and NO EMOTION RULE which we will go onto next when we look at the first step in our 1-2-3 program – controlling obnoxious behaviour.



STEP ONE – Counting obnoxious behaviour

When we count obnoxious behaviour we want the kids to:

- 1) think about what they're doing
- 2) take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Here's how to do it. Say little Johnny asks you 30 minutes before dinner for a candy. You say no cause it will spoil his appetite and he won't finish his dinner. Johnny then starts having a temper tantrum – shouting, banging cupboards etc. Mum CALMLY [no emotion] looks down at the little tyke and says “That's 1!” and holds one finger up. Five seconds later if he's still in full swing with his tantrum mum again CALMLY [no emotion] says “That's 2!” and holds up the two fingers. If he still doesn't shape up we say “That's 3 – take a timeout!”

A timeout is usually one minute per age of the child. Its best that they go to their bedrooms. Some parents use the timeout chair but their bedroom is best as they're out of sight so they can't try and provoke you. Remember no electronic equipment, video games, telephone, friends etc for the period of the timeout. The other option is to use a **Timeout Alternative** – loss of a privilege or toy for a period of time, bedtime 15 minutes early, 25pence off allowance etc.

Let's review what happened in the example above. We gave the kid two chances to shape up and he blew it. He now has to face the consequences.

The next step is CRITICAL and is usually where parents go and bottle it. When he's come back from his timeout there is to be NO TALKING – there's to be no lectures, no apologizing and no discussions. YOU MUST REMAIN QUIET.



This is the basis of the NO TALKING and NO EMOTION rule that is KEY to the whole program. By not showing emotion, little Johnny is not going to have the feeling of control and POWER he may get, from pushing your buttons. Sure deep down you might be mad as heck- you may have had a long day, be tired etc etc but YOU MUST NOT SHOW THAT HE IS GETTING TO YOU. The one exception to the “no talking” rule is when they've done something serious and it's necessary for the parent to explain to them why what they've done is wrong e.g. using a bad word/lying.

Often parents say the program starts off working for them and then the kid seems to get immune to it and it no longer works. The usual reason is the parent has slipped up and forgotten the NO TALKING and NO EMOTION rule. I can't emphasize this enough – it's the key to everything. COUNT CALMLY, NO EMOTION and NO TALKING.

With the no talking rule we are trying to keep the child's focus on the need for good behaviour. If you start talking after the timeout you raise the possibility for a really enjoyable argument – and let's face it some kids would sooner cut off a leg than lose an argument of words. The real magic is not the counting part, it's the PAUSE between the counts. It's in those few seconds between counts that you are giving him the opportunity to take responsibility for his behaviour. If you start talking and begging the child to be reasonable not only have you 1) lost control of the situation but more importantly you are 2) thinking for the child and 3) taking responsibility for his behaviour. That's not going to get us anywhere.

If the child behaves you praise him and enjoy his company. If he does something bad again you start counting from 1 after his timeout. There are no fractions – no $2\frac{1}{2}$, $2\frac{3}{4}$! ITS 1-2-3, No TALKING and NO EMOTION.

Kick off conversation:

Its only fair to warn the kids when you first start the program that there's going to be a few changes around the house. The explanation may go way over there heads but its worth doing. Both parents, even if they live separately should sit down TOGETHER with the kids and have a conversation that goes like the following: “Listen guys there are times when you do things we don't care for, like arguing, whining and teasing. From now on we are going to do something a little different. When we see you doing something you're not supposed to, we'll say “That's 1!” That's a warning and it means you're supposed to stop. If you don't stop we'll say “That's 2!” If you still don't stop well say “That's 3 – take 5!” That means you have to go to your room for a timeout or a kind of rest period. When you come out we don't talk about what happened unless it's really necessary. We just forget it and start over. If you do something really serious like swearing or hitting we'll say “That's 3 – take 10 or 15!” - you go straight to your room and the time will be longer.”

Six kinds of testing and manipulation:



Kids use the following six tactics to get to you: badgering, temper, threats, martyrdom, buttering up, and physical tactics. If a kid always seems to be using the same tactic on you it's usually a sign that that tactic is working for him i.e. it's particularly effective at getting under your skin. If a kid keeps swapping tactics to try and annoy you that's usually a better sign – the parent is following the NO EMOTION rule and little Johnny doesn't seem to be having much luck at getting you all hot and bothered. Well done- your half way there!

For serious misbehaviour use the MAJOR/MINOR system. This is where the offence is too serious to count e.g. lying. Have a list of offences and what the consequences will be worked out beforehand. What we want to do is stop obnoxious behaviour before it sets in and becomes more difficult to manage when they're older.

Kids with more destructive behavioural problems have two major motives: 1) hostile/vengeful tendencies and 2) are thrill seeking (e.g. smoking, cutting school). These kids can go on and become what the professionals label as having Oppositional Defiant Disorder. There is probably some genetic basis, but this disorder can be caused as well as seriously aggravated by sloppy, inconsistent, angry and overly wordy parenting. Left unchecked they can graduate to having Conduct Disorder the new politically correct term for juvenile delinquent. For most parents using the counting 1-2-3 system will be enough, but for kids with more serious behavioural problems parents should use the Major/Minor system.

All of the techniques above will only work if used **CONSISTENTLY**. If mum and dad live apart it is best for both parents to use the program, otherwise the kids will try and play one parent off against the other. If the other parent won't take things on board it's still worth doing the program – it's just going to be much much harder. The program is even more effective if it can be used at school as well, so have a word with the teachers.

Remember if you are in doubt especially in the beginning, it is best to **COUNT** the behaviour. The only exceptions to this are kids who use buttering up/passive pouting, when it's usually only appropriate to count them if they start becoming aggressive when they are doing it. If a child goes to his room and continues to scream while he's there the timeout doesn't start until he's quiet. If he tries to leave the room, you put him back in there and hold the door shut if need be. If they're older and physically too big/strong and you're worried that they're going to resist you, use a timeout alternative i.e. dock a privilege etc.

Below are a couple of examples for managing the more difficult situations:

- **Lying:**
People lie to impress other people or to avoid getting into trouble. Let's say you've found out that little Johnny has been in trouble at school. Avoid asking him how school went to see if you can catch him out in the lie. You're only giving him extra practice at becoming a better liar. Don't question him out of the blue. Instead say “Tell me what happened, but not right now. Think about it awhile and we'll talk in 15 minutes.” Another option is to tell the youngster what you know and get them to come up with their own punishment. Finish off with saying “I'm sure you'll do better next time.”
- **Sibling rivalry:**
A quick mention on this one. The two most stupid questions you can ask when you walk in and your two kids are screaming at each other is “What happened and who started it?” You don't want to get drawn into the argument. **COUNT BOTH OF THE KIDS.**
- **Discipline when not at home**
This is the situation when you're not at home and there's no timeout room/place – the classic example being in the grocery store. Any parent will tell you this is their worst nightmare. Other parents will be watching you to see how you deal with the situation and little Johnny will be watching like a hawk for signs you're crumbling under the pressure. There's nothing new here – the **NO TALKING** and **NO EMOTION** rules still apply. Some parents will have the timeout in the middle of the aisle, holding their hand for 5 minutes with no talking. Other alternatives are taking them to the bathroom in the shop/taking them to the car. In general it's better to dish out the punishment then and there rather than saving it for when you get home. This is true especially for younger kids who don't have long enough recalls to associate the crime with the punishment. For the fights that happen in the car, options include pulling over, turning back, withholding the ice cream that you were going out to get etc. And for goodness sakes don't be making the classic mistake “if you do that one more time I swear I'm going to turn this car around!” Its 1-2-3 and then turn around.

Some parents may ask why go through all the trouble. The answer is:

- 1) They're kids.
- 2) They're still learning how to behave.
- 3) All that trouble is a sound investment for the future and your piece of mind!

ONE FINAL TIME. It's count 1-2-3, Timeout. **NO Talking. NO Emotion.**

Next we are going to move onto step 2 of the program “Encouraging good behaviour”. Its best to be confident at counting and having the children's obnoxious behaviour under control before moving to the second stage.



STEP 2 – Encouraging good behaviour

How do you get kids to do positive things – like doing their homework and cleaning their rooms? For the things we want the kids to start doing, we use what we call “START BEHAVIOUR”. The counting technique that you used to control obnoxious behaviour in the last section WILL NOT WORK for start behaviour. You need to use different techniques for controlling obnoxious behaviour to those used to encourage good behaviour because these different behaviours require different levels of motivation. It only takes a kid a second to stop teasing his younger sister but it takes a lot more time and effort for him to do his homework.

There are 7 strategies for start behaviour:

- 1) **PRAISE** – When people are happy they tend to keep quiet and shout when they're angry. When the kids are playing happily we tend not to praise them – we **THINK TO OURSELVES**(i.e. keep quiet) - good finally a bit of peace and quiet! We **SHOUT** at them when they're arguing because they're annoying us. Praise and positive interaction should outnumber negative comments by three or four to one. We should be saying “well done guys for getting on so well during the movie.” For the older kid praise him, don't go and embarrass him. Keep it more precise “Good job.” The types of praise that kids really love are 1) praise in front of other people and 2) unexpected praise.
You might want to try praise/positive reinforcement with your spouse or work colleagues – what this is really all about is making the other person feel appreciated and let me tell you, **PEOPLE LOVE IT!** It's going to make your life a whole lot easier!
- 2) **SIMPLE REQUESTS** – There's a right and a wrong way of going about this one. Key points are:
 - Tone of voice – you're letting the kid know that you mean business.
 - Avoid the spontaneous request – a request out of the blue is a real cooperation killer. Remember you were not put on this Earth to be personal slaves to your kids. It's only fair that the kids should have to help out with chores. Use the kitchen timer outlined below- it will help to soften the blow.
 - Phrasing – wording is important. “Wouldn't we rather do our homework?” Answer – **NO**. He'd rather be out playing with his friends. It needs to be business like “It's time to start your homework.”
- 3) **KITCHEN TIMERS** – These are fantastic devices for encouraging good behaviour. Kids, especially the younger ones, have a natural tendency of wanting to beat a ticking mechanical device. Go for the wind up kitchen timer type. The problem is now man against machine rather than kid against parent. It's effective as it's non testing – your response is silence, the timer's response is “tick, tick, tick”. For example if a friend is coming over and you want your 5 year old to tidy up the mess he's left around the house set the timer to 5 and say “I bet you can't beat it!”
- 4) **DOCKING SYSTEM** – Explain to the kid there is good and bad news. The good news is that if he forgets a chore you'll do it for him. The bad part is that he's going to have to pay you for doing it. Use allowances when kids are 5 years or older. Half of the allowance should be for completing chores and the other half is so that you have leverage using the docking system. If they don't do the chore you don't nag/pester them to do it, you do it **QUIETLY** for them, and then dock them the allowance after.
- 5) **NATURAL CONSEQUENCES** – Sometimes the best way for a kid to learn is by letting them get into trouble and learn the hard way. Natural consequences are particularly effective for kids who like to please. If the kid doesn't seem to mind being told off by his piano teacher for not practising you'll have to swap to a different type of start behaviour.

6) CHARTING

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Ready for bed on time							
Cleaned table after supper							
Picked up after themselves							

With charting we use a calendar to chart different start behaviours. For children aged 4-9 use stickers and for older kids use grades or points (A-F, 5-1). This works well for some kids if they get satisfaction in doing a good job – the chart acts as a natural reinforcer. For other kids e.g. the natural slob who takes no pride in having his room clean, use **ARTIFICIAL REINFORCERS** where the child will earn something for completing a task. For small kids use relatively small things that can be dished out frequently, like brightly coloured tokens. For older kids where the task is going to take longer to complete, you are going to have to have a bigger reward e.g. rent out a special movie, have a sleep over. Its best to only chart 3-4 behaviours at any one time. If they get two weeks of good scores take it off the chart – and go out for a special treat like a pizza. Try and use natural consequences, praise, the chart itself and job satisfaction initially and only use artificial rewards (allowances, points etc) if you are not getting anywhere because the task is so obnoxious or foreign to the kid. If they start slipping into their old ways you start charting the behaviour again.

- 7) COUNTING – This is the same version of the counting system that was used in section 1 to control their obnoxious behaviour. NOTE: Counting can ONLY be used if the start behaviour requires less than 2 minutes of their attention to get done e.g. the kid who comes in from school and throws his coat on the floor rather than hanging it up by the door. Count them!

Below are a few worked examples and a few other helpful hints:

- Up and out in the morning

Preschoolers	Give kids lots of help and praise
Young kids (6-9)	Praise, kitchen timers, charting
Older kids	Natural consequences. Getting up is THEIR responsibility. This can be nerve racking for parents but they're going to have to learn at some stage to do it for themselves. Let them get burned a couple times. No nagging them to get them going – KEEP QUIET.

- Cleaning up their room
 - One strategy is to close door and don't look. I'm being serious – it's an option. You have more important battles to win and is this really your top priority?
 - Weekly cleanup routine. Saturday morning they can't go out and play until the room is tidy.
 - Charting.

- Cleaning up around the house

Garbage bag method	Set time everyday that their things have to be removed from public areas and returned to their rooms e.g. 8pm. Remind at 7:50 and at 8:05 start putting everything in a garbage bag and put it in your bedroom closet – they lose the use of the items until 6pm the following day. The following day you say “Clean up time” and they'll be scurrying around the house to rescue their stuff. Afterwards tell them “good job- it looks really nice in the house.”
“55 Gallon drum”	All the kids stuff gets put in one place – large box/drum. Rather than pestering you where their shoes have gone they just look in the box/drum.
Kitchen timer and docking system	

● CHORES

Remember that you weren't put on this Earth to be personal slaves to your kids. It's only fair that they should help out about the house.

- For children less than 5 praise them whenever they help out. Don't expect them to be able to remember or sustain work projects for more than a few minutes.
- For kids over 6 use FAMILY MEETINGS to discuss and divide up the chores. We'll talk more about this later in this section.
- Charting and docking

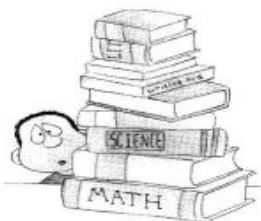
● PETS

Docking system – its not appropriate to let the dog starve to death if your kid forgets to feed it! The best advice for parents - don't even consider getting an animal that you yourself don't want to take care of.

● MEALTIMES

Kitchen timer	When all of you sit down at the table, set the timer to 20 minutes. Tell kids they have to finish before the timer goes off otherwise no dessert. When starting out give them super small portions. Do not nag or prompt, the timer will do that for you. If kids goof around COUNT it – if they reach 3 they have a timeout for 5 and the timer is kept running. If they don't finish their food in time cover their plate in cling film and leave it on the counter. After 30 minutes the children are allowed to finish the meal (nuke it in the microwave first) BUT they don't get any dessert.
3 out of 4 rule	Eats 3 out of 4 items on plate and has to at least taste the one thing he's chosen not to eat. Research shows that kids who are exposed to new foods but are not forced to eat them will often come round and start to enjoy them. Its more healthy for them in the long run.
Divide and conquer	Some experts claim mealtimes are for “family togetherness” for each person “to share his day”. Sometimes though it seems dinner is a time to share hostility - both tempers and appetites are lost for everyone concerned. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't eat together every night – it sure beats all the fighting. Feed kids first or let them go in front of TV for once/or where they want to go as long as they bring back the dishes. Mum and day can then have peaceful dinner together. • Take one child out to dinner as a special treat. This avoids sibling rivalry. The kid will also appreciate the one on one time with their parent.

● HOMEWORK



Routine is critical! Homework should be a daily routine – done at the same time and in the same place as much as possible. Remember don't ask the kid out of the blue if he has homework to do – that's a spontaneous request and will provoke hostility.

When your kid gets back from school let him goof around for 30-45 minutes and then get down to his homework with the aim of finishing it before dinner (sitting down at 8pm after dinner with a full stomach is no time for scholastic achievement). Don't let them have the TV on, it's way too distracting (background music is okay though). That way the rest of the evening is free for him and YOU to enjoy.

Natural consequences	Let him explain to his teacher why the homework hasn't been done. Don't tell him afterwards “I told you so!” Instead say something like “I'm sure that must have been embarrassing for you having to tell your teacher why it wasn't done. I'm sure you will do better tomorrow.” Parents who become too anxious too soon about homework are 1) prematurely taking charge 2) robbing their children of the chance to learn and exercise true responsibility.
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	Try this for a few weeks and if it's not working try using assignment sheets/notebooks so that you know what work is due for what subjects. It helps prevent lying/arguments about homework.										
POSITIVE-negative-POSITIVE	Whenever your kid shows you something they've done, the first thing out of your mouth MUST be something positive e.g. how neat it looks. You can then make a negative comment if it's absolutely necessary. Then finish off with a positive comment - so it's positive-negative-positive. Starting off with a positive comment will help to bring him back again and again – otherwise he'll never want to bring anything to you.										
Rough checkout	This will make your evening more pleasant. If your kid's work is anywhere near 80% neat, correct and thorough consider calling it a day. Let your youngster and teacher continue worrying about the assignment tomorrow if they want to. Adjust the percentage to the child's ability e.g. 90% for a kid who normally gets A-Bs. Perfectionist parents who may feel uncomfortable about this need to stay in touch with the emotional realities of childhood.										
Charting	Score as follows: <table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td>Neat</td> <td>1 point</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Correct</td> <td>1 point</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thorough</td> <td>1 point</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No complaining</td> <td>1 point</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MAGIC point</td> <td>1 point</td> </tr> </table> <p>The MAGIC point is for him starting on his own and for starting at the right time without being reminded (which is half the battle). For kids who don't respond to charting you may need to use artificial reinforcers e.g. special trip, meal, allowance</p>	Neat	1 point	Correct	1 point	Thorough	1 point	No complaining	1 point	MAGIC point	1 point
Neat	1 point										
Correct	1 point										
Thorough	1 point										
No complaining	1 point										
MAGIC point	1 point										
Kitchen timers	Use to break up work into smaller manageable 15-20 minutes pieces. It helps to keep the younger kids focused.										

- PRACTICING A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

Natural consequences, charting with/without artificial rewards, positive-negative-positive, charting.

- BEDTIME

Basic bedtime methods	Set a bedtime and stick to it. Exceptions should be rare otherwise you open yourself up for negotiation. Vary bedtime according to whether school night/weekend, during the school year/vacation. e.g. if your nine year old's bedtime is 9, at 8:30 set timer for 30 min and tell child its time to get ready for bed. Make bedtime list as to what they need to be doing perfectly clear and that it's the child's responsibility to put on their PJs, brush teeth etc (if <5 years old you will have to help them to get ready but same rewards and consequences apply). When completed all the tasks he then reports back to you. You make sure he's done everything and then PRAISE him for his efforts. Now comes the REWARD . Whatever time is left between 8:30 and 9 is time for just the two of you. Sit and read a story/just talk together. Kids really love this 1 on 1 time with their parents. Don't do anything overly exciting/energetic (need to relax and get in the right mood for sleep). One caution – don't lie down on the bed – chances are you will fall asleep and the kid will become dependent and start expecting/demanding to sleep with you.
Getting out of bed	If he gets out of bed after bedtime the longer he's out of bed and the longer he stays up, the more reinforcement he gets for this behaviour and the more he's going to want to get out of bed. The best way is to cut him off at the pass i.e. the doorway to his room. Sit in a chair in the doorway facing away from the kid. DON'T TALK no matter what he says. If he gets out of bed gently put him back.

Night time waking	<p>Follow the steps below and most kids will be sleeping through the night in a few weeks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accept some periodic waking as normal 2. NO TALKING and NO EMOTION Don't ask the child what's wrong - usually they are too groggy to give you a sensible answer. It's more likely to wake them up. Bad dreams can be discussed in the morning if need be (usually they will have forgotten about it by morning anyway). 3. Assume the child may have to go to the bathroom Often kids will wake up needing to use the toilet but they are too groggy to be sure what it is that woke them up. Remember no talking- just steer them to the toilet. 4. Be gentle and quiet No grabbing or pushing we want them to stay sleepy. 5. NO LIGHTS Lights will wake them and YOU up very quickly. 6. Don't go the child's room unless you have to Parents sometimes let the kids sleep with them as its the quickest way to get them quiet. You'll pay for this in the long run! They are only going to demand to sleep with you and you're only going to get a temper tantrum when you eventually try and get them back to their room. An exception should be when there's a thunder storm. Floor fans can be useful at creating white noise/repetitive noise that helps to keep the kid asleep.
Waking up too early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider putting bedtime back an hour. • Not too much sunlight in bedroom in the morning– blanket over window. • Take them to the toilet <p>If the above doesn't work try and get him to play in his room instead of waking you up. Use a chart on the back of his bedroom door and score for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Playing by himself 2) NOT waking anyone else up <p>When you get up in the morning the first thing you do is IMMEDIATELY go to the chart and tally up his score and praise him for a good job. If he forgets and comes to your room at 5am you count him. If he gets to 3, escort him back to his room and remember NO TALKING and NO EMOTION.</p>

FAMILY MEETING

We finish off this section with what many parents find the most aggravating and the most effective things they can do with their children – the family meeting. When children are small you the parent, are the boss. You know what is best for them, you have a right and duty to do this – even if they don't like it. As they grow older the house should run almost, but not quite ☺ as a democracy – they should have more independence in decisions about bedtime, leisure activities, choice of friends etc.

Its best to start with family meetings when the kids are in primary school. Keep the meeting under one hour and be as patient as you can. Don't expect anyone to want to come! Topics might include laundry, vacation, food, sibling rivalry etc.

Family meetings are useful:

- As kids get older and more rational it's only fair that they have a voice regarding issues that affect them e.g. chores, phone privileges etc.
- They will often cooperate better with a decision/policy if they have had a say in making it.
- Need experience of family negotiating for later in their lives when they have their own marriages and families

How to run: mum OR dad is the chairperson. Each person brings to the meeting a problem they want to discuss. Then:

- 1) One person describes the problem they want resolving.
- 2) Every other person gives his or her thoughts and feeling about the problem.
- 3) The floor is opened to proposals for solution; anyone can speak, but one at a time.

- 4) A solution to be tried is agreed upon. This final idea may combine aspects of the suggestions from different people. If there are disagreements, mum or dad have the final say.
- 5) The agreed-upon solution is written down on a piece of paper that is then posted on the refrigerator. Or the solution can be written in a family meeting journal, notebook or computer.
- 6) The next person brings up his problem and step 2-5 are repeated.

WHEN TO TALK

- It's not going to be a good time to talk when the punishment is being enforced because the child is not going to be open minded.
- Explain right away if problem is new, unusual or dangerous.
- Before you talk ask your child some thought provoking questions:
 - What would happen if you did that?
 - Why is this a good thing to do?
 - Why do you think I want you to do your homework?
 - Why does your teacher ask you to be quiet?

Kids learn their behaviour by watching you and other adults, from other kids, from TV, books, music etc. It's important that you lead by example. Remember that changing behaviour depends on understanding the consequences of their actions. And most important of all- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!! In the final step in the 1-2-3 program below we'll look at how to "strengthen your relationship with your child".



STEP 3 – Strengthening your relationship

Parents want their kids to grow up to be considerate and responsible adults and TO BE HAPPY. Happiness depends on a healthy self esteem and is based on four things:

- 1) Good relationships with other people
- 2) Feeling like you're good at something (competence in work and self-management)
- 3) Caring for one's body
- 4) Character: courage, effort, following the rules and concern for others

By following the 1-2-3 program we are going to encourage and help build the child's self esteem.

OVER PARENTING:



Parents who **CONSTANTLY** verbalize their worries about their kids do two things to their children:

- 1) Irritate their youngsters.
The anxious parent/angry child syndrome. The child feels like you're insulting them all the time by saying that they can't do anything right.
- 2) Undermine the child's self confidence

Clearly common sense and a balance is required here, but sometimes it's better to keep quiet, cross your fingers, do your best to relax and watch your child learn and mature.

AFFECTION AND PRAISE

Praise and affection to kids are what water and fertilizer are for plants. Kids thrive on it. Remember what we said earlier that positive comments need to outnumber negative ones by at least three or four to one. If you are struggling to give your kids enough praise and affection is it because:

1) The parent isn't feeling happy?

It's very difficult to be positive to other people if you yourself aren't feeling happy. Are there things that you want to change about yourself (relationship with your partner, managing your boss's behaviour, dealing better with stress)? If you think you're struggling with any of these things have a read of another resource I've written which is available at <http://medinfo.redirectme.net/happiness.pdf>

2) How a parent is feeling toward a child.

Kids are very good at sensing how you're feeling about them. Some parents may love their child but deep down if the parent was to admit it to themselves, they don't like the child. It may be because the child is doing something to annoy you like whining and having tantrums all the time. Parents don't want to admit they feel this way about their kids, but often it results in the parent feeling very guilty and coming up short in expressing praise and affection. By using the first two steps in the 1-2-3 program to control obnoxious behaviour and encourage good behaviour you'll then start to enjoy spending time with them.

1 ON 1 FUN!

To like your kids you need to have fun with them on a regular basis by spending 1 on 1 time with EACH child. Fun with the entire family isn't all it's cracked up to be mainly because:

- Sibling rivalry: Kids enjoy the 1 on 1 time with a parent without having to compete with their brother/sister for your attention.
- The more people who are involved the greater the chance for conflict and difference in opinion. Instead, get out of the house so you can't be disturbed. Spend 1 on 1 time with your child baking cookies, reading, playing catch, going to the zoo.

ACTIVE LISTENING

This involves more than just nodding your head when the other person is talking. The idea here is to understand what the other person is saying/doing from their point of view, so that you can understand what the other person is feeling. Encourage active listening by using:



- Openers: "Tell me what happened." Or it may be something simple like just putting down the paper you were reading and showing that you're paying attention to what they're saying.
- Asking non judgemental questions. Asking, "why did you do something stupid like that?" is just going to make them mad.
- Reflecting feelings – acknowledge how they feel. "I can see why that made you mad."
- Perception checks – summarize what they said back to them. It shows them that you have been paying attention.

Active listening is a great self esteem builder for kids. You'll learn how your kids think about life. Its best to do this while they're still young, so that you get to know what they're thinking when they're teenagers!

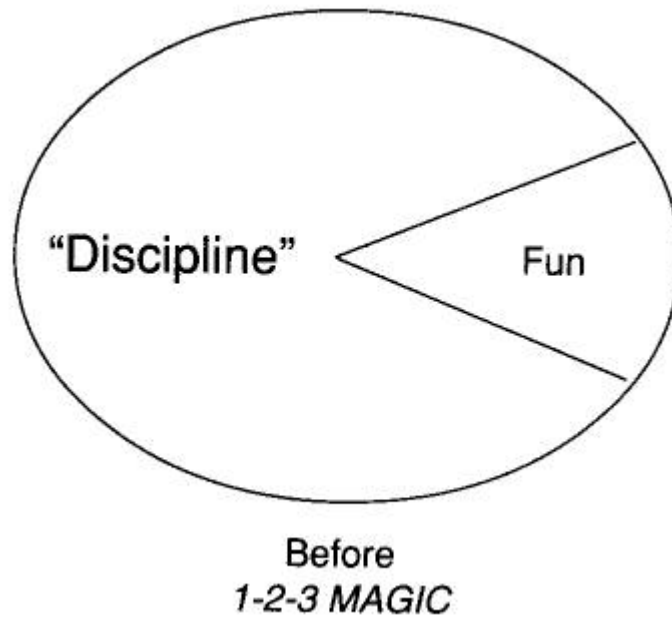
Parents sometime ask when they should count and when they should use active listening:

- Listen if they are not angry with you.
- Start counting if their anger switches to you.
- Discuss problems. Count attacks.

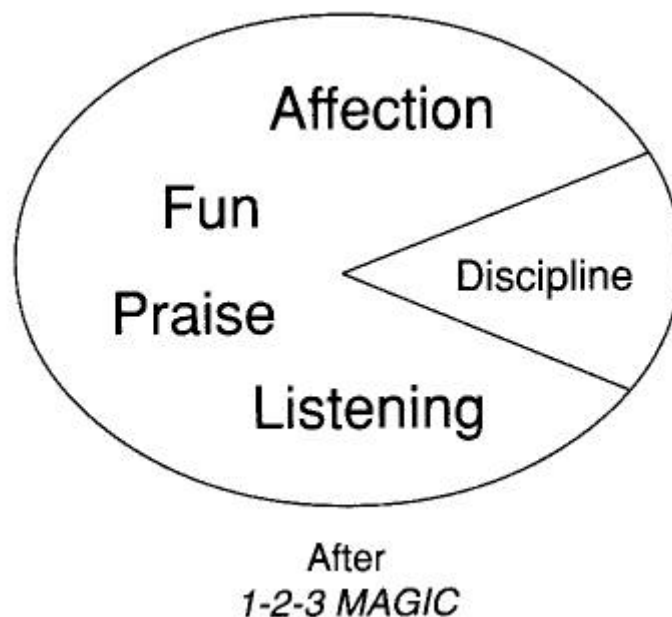
Remember you are a good active listener if while your child is talking you're trying to understand what your child is saying and feeling. You are a bad listener if you're planning your rebuttal ☺

That's it – we've now covered all 3 steps of the program. Remember that if your child initially seems to respond well to the program but then starts slipping it may be because you've forgotten the NO TALKING and NO EMOTION rules. It's easy to do- what with work, busy schedules, new babies etc etc. Go back to basics- they'll soon get the idea. If you are CONSISTENTLY doing all the steps outlined above and it doesn't seem to be working then it's time to go to your GP. Learning difficulties such as dyslexia, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), depression, autism, substance abuse etc. can all present as more demanding behavioural problems. Remember that help is ALWAYS at hand!

Before you start the program you may be spending your time like this:



Hopefully after the 1-2-3 program it will be more like this:



Not only is it going to build your child's self esteem - it's also going to help you feel better about things as you'll feel more in control. Take charge of your home today and start having some fun with your kids¹

GOOD LUCK!!!

This document is also available online at: <http://medinfo.redirectme.net/parenting.pdf>

¹ This paper is a summary of a book called "1-2-3 Magic" by Dr. Thomas Phelan, PhD – ISBN 1-889140-16-3. The book gives further examples, and is a great read for anyone who looks after kids. Channel 4 are also running a series called "Supernanny" which uses the parenting principles outlined in the book. It's worth watching other parents to see what to do and just as important, WHAT NOT TO DO © Dr. R Baptiste