



10 Ways Kids Can Say "No!" to Peers

by Judy Arnall, BA, CCFE

As we are heading into back to school season, children may pick up that peer pressure exists in their school either directly or indirectly. Some peer pressure is positive, but some isn't. One of the best lessons they can learn this Fall is how to say "no" to their peers, or even adults that don't always have their best interests in mind. Here are some quick come-backs that parents can role-play with their kids in order to say "no" to actions they don't want to do.

10 Ways kids can say 'No!'

- Ask questions - "What if such and such happens?"
- Give it a name - "That's stealing! No way."
- Refer to the parent - "Nope. My Mom won't let me."
- Get an ally - "No, Jason and I are going to Switchbox instead."
- Suggest an alternative - "Why don't we play Xbox at my house?"
- State consequences - "I want a career in law enforcement and need a clean record."
- Stall - "Hmmmmm...maybe later."
- Offer an excuse - "I have to go and meet someone."
- Say "No" another way - "I can't." "I don't feel like it today." No explanation needed.
- Make a joke - "Yeah, wouldn't that look great on YouTube!"
- If all else fails - ignore, act busy, or just walk away.

Helping your child deal with the possible fallout from saying 'No!'

- Help your child focus on other peer groups. Get her involved in groups outside of school such as church, scouting, cadets, or on-going classes or clubs.
- Acknowledge his feelings of loneliness and sadness. Share stories of times that you felt isolated due to peer pressure.
- Spend more time with your child and build her confidence and esteem. Notice and comment on her worth as a person, "I'm so glad you are my daughter," and also things she does well, "I noticed how much effort you put into studying for that exam."
- We all have times we need extra support. Make your family a soft landing place for the harsh realities of the outside world.

We can't protect our child from the sanctions of refusing peers, but we can and should teach him how to cope with his emotions, pick himself up and work through the problem. This builds resiliency and parents are best able to help him. Kids need us just as much in the tween and teen years as the toddler stage!

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