

# Top Discipline

We asked Katy parents to tell us their top discipline frustrations. Here are the most common complaints, along with advice from experts and parents on what to do.

*Written by Katrina Katsarelis and Heather Lowrie*

## DISOBEYING

### THE PROBLEM

Every night, you tell your son to put on his pajamas and brush his teeth for bed. Every night, he ignores you, and you find yourself spending an extra hour each night nagging him to obey.



### THE FIX

Establish family house rules and be prepared to communicate the rules often and enforce them consistently. Unclear boundaries and shallow consequences are the number one reason children don't obey. When it's time for bed, give him advanced notice of what he's expected to do at bedtime and what will happen if he doesn't do it. Then, issue a warning or count to three before swiftly enforcing the consequence.

## TANTRUMS

### THE PROBLEM

Most temper tantrums happen out of frustration when young children can't communicate very well or they are not getting what they want. The more you give in to the tantrum, the more frequent they become.



### THE FIX

Before every outing, explain to your child what you will be doing and how you expect her to behave. Children who are tired, hungry, or off-schedule are at high risk for a meltdown. When a tantrum hits, just stay calm and remove yourself from the situation. Reacting and giving in to the tantrum will only guarantee more tantrums in the future.

## TECHNOLOGY DISTRACTIONS

### THE PROBLEM

It's difficult to have a conversation with your kids, because they are always texting, playing Angry Birds, Tweeting, or Facebooking.

### THE FIX

Set limits on the amount of time your kids and teens can spend on these distractions, and then enforce them. Establish and enforce social media use rules, as well.

During meals, car rides, or family meetings, you can have an "all electronics off" rule to help facilitate family communication. If it still doesn't work, remove the distraction until they can follow the rules.



## LYING

### THE PROBLEM

You caught your child feeding her sandwich to the dog again, and, even though you saw her do it, she won't fess up.

### THE FIX

Teach your child from an early age that lying is against the family's values and that you expect truthful behavior. If lying persists, give her a consequence such as a time-out or removal of privileges. When a child does tell the truth in a difficult situation, make sure to acknowledge her for being honest and reward her positive step forward.



# Dilemmas *for Katy parents*

Anyone who has ever held the job title of “parent” knows that it isn’t a job for sissies. It takes a lot of time, dedication, love, and boundary-setting to raise well-behaved Katy kids. We asked Katy families about their top discipline concerns and solicited advice from professionals and parents on how to dole out effective discipline. Here are the most common discipline dilemmas according to Katy families.

## TALKING BACK

### THE PROBLEM

You asked your daughter to clean her room three times today and instead of cooperating, she gives you another argument about how it’s her room, not yours!

### THE FIX

If you’re asking your child to do something three times, you are probably being inconsistent with discipline. Let her know you don’t allow back talk and why: that it is disrespectful and it’s against the family rules.

Whenever back talk happens, swiftly impose a consequence, such as losing a privilege or turning off her cell phone for a day. Teach her appropriate ways to communicate to get her needs met.



## WHINING AND FUSSING

### THE PROBLEM

Whenever you say no, your preschooler immediately starts whining and cajoling you in hopes of changing your mind.

### THE FIX

If you have already said no, do not respond or react to the whining and simply walk away. The more you negotiate and converse with a whining child, the more you are teaching her that this technique works.

Whining and cajoling is not just reserved for young children; it can also become an annoying habit of school-agers, tweens, and teens. The earlier you teach her to accept no for an answer, the better off you will all be.



## OVERINDULGENCE

### THE PROBLEM

Your daughter has always been sweet and loving, but lately you’ve noticed she doesn’t seem grateful for what she has and even gets upset if things don’t go exactly her way.

### THE FIX

Overindulging your child with over-the-top birthday parties and expensive gifts at an early age may give her an over-inflated sense of entitlement. Plan age-appropriate parties and save that lavish country club party for her wedding. It’s important for parents to teach delayed gratification by encouraging children to wait for video game systems for Christmas or birthdays. Save iPhones and iPads for high school or college.



## FIGHTING WITH SIBLINGS

### THE PROBLEM

Your kids will play nicely together for a while, but soon it erupts in to fighting, screaming, and sometimes even hitting.

### THE FIX

Teach children how to resolve conflicts by sitting them down and showing them how to communicate calmly by talking things out and coming up with solutions together.

Set house rules for what is never allowed, such as hitting, name-calling, bullying, and taking someone else’s things, and have consequences when the ground rules are broken.



Special thanks to Mary Lyles Ph.D., LCSW of Katy Family Counseling and the Katy families we talked to for input and advice on this story.

# More Discipline Tips

*from Katy parents and experts*

## CHECK YOUR OWN ACTIONS

Mary Lyles Ph.D., LCSW of Katy Family Counseling encourages parents to demonstrate their morality through their actions. If children see you lie about something, they will learn to lie, too. If they see you bending the rules, they will learn that rules can be broken.

## BE CONSISTENT

Mom and dad need to be on the same page with regard to enforcing consequences, or the children will run amok. By being consistent each time, every time, you will teach children that when they choose the behavior, they choose the consequence.

## ESTABLISH HOUSE RULES

Take time to set your behavioral expectations, establishing family rules for good behavior and posting them where the children can see them. Update them with new rules as often as needed.

## HOLD FAMILY MEETINGS


Lyles recommends a weekly family meeting to talk about how each person is doing, discuss any issues, and stay in communication. Encourage children to bring their issues to the table for open discussion, and then listen to them.

## HAVE FAMILY DINNERS

Try and have dinner together each night with electronics off limits. Spend that time talking about the day, not discussing problems, complaining, or criticizing. "Good food, love, and laughter can go a long way toward making healthy families," says Lyles.

## CATCH THEM BEING GOOD

When you see your child following the rules, overcoming a pattern of behavior, or resolving conflicts appropriately, make sure to notice and acknowledge their effort. Always try to notice the good things they do, instead of focusing on the negative.




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