



Shoalhaven Managing Children Program (SMCP)

8. Preventing arguments

Difficult situations can often lead to arguments. Arguments can lead to tantrums. If you can prevent arguments, difficult situations are much easier to manage. Some strategies to help you prevent arguments are:

Choosing alternatives. One way to manage a difficult situation is to give your child a choice between alternatives acceptable to you. The child can choose either of your alternatives, but not another unacceptable alternative, e.g.:

If your child wants to run around and yell and scream inside the house, you can say:

“If you want to run and be noisy, go outside. If you want to stay inside, play quietly in the family room. Which are you going to do?”

Grandma’s Rule. (“Do what I want first, then you can do what you want.”)

This arranges the order of activities to get a child to do things he or she doesn’t want to do. It makes doing that thing necessary so the child can do something else he or she wants, e.g.:

You want your child’s room cleaned up; the child wants to go out and play:

Child: “Can I go out and play?”

You: “Okay, as soon as your room’s tidy.”

If your child whinges about not being allowed out, you can say:

“I’m not stopping you. You’re only stopping yourself.”

or:

“The sooner you get it done, the more time you’ll have to play. You’re only wasting your own time.”