

## **Nine Tips to Curb Whining!**

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Every child whines sometimes, but for most parents, a whiney voice is really hard to listen to. Here are some creative tips for reducing whining at your house.

### **There are 4 Common Reasons Why Kids Whine:**

**1) There's an Underlying/Unmet Need.** Your child may be hungry, tired or hurt.

**2) There's an Underlying Emotion.** Your child may be feeling bored, sad, left out or frustrated.

**3) It's a Developmental Issue.** Language skills are still developing from ages 2-5, so your child may not have the vocabulary to express the problem.

**4) Manipulation.** Your child wants what s/he wants when s/he wants it!! Your child will use whining as a way to wear you down and gain control of the outcome.

### **So how do you get your child to stop whining? Here are 9 options for you to choose from.**

**Option 1.** The most direct route is to say, "You're using a whining voice right now and that hurts my ears. I'll answer you when you use your normal voice." Ignore the child's requests until s/he uses a "normal" voice.

**Option 2.** You can record a child's voice when he's whining and play it back to him or just have him "pretend" to whine while recording it so he can hear how it sounds. The child usually gets a chuckle out of it. Give the whiney voice a name, like "Whimpy." Then when your child whines, you can say, "Uh oh, Whimpy's here. I've lost Ken. Do you know where Ken is? Ken, Ken come out, wherever you are!"

**Option 3.** Kids are prone to whine when they're tired, bored or hungry. See if your child has one of those needs and address the need.

**Option 4.** Kids are also more prone to whining when their vocabulary is limited. Try to provide words for your child that she may not have yet. i.e. "You wish that you could swim longer because you're having so much fun that you don't want to leave?!"

**Option 5.** You can role play with puppets during a quiet time. Have your child be the parent and you can be the child. Act out a scene where the child wants an extra dessert and use an irritating whiney voice. Ask the child how s/he felt listening to a whiney voice and what the parent should do to stop the child from using a whiney voice. Your child may surprise you with an inventive answer!

**Option 6.** You can tell the child that if he wants to use a whiney voice, he can use it in his room, but not where you are.

**Option 7.** There's a children's song (Maybe the Wiggles sing it?) that has lyrics like "I'm gonna shake, shake, shake my sillies out. Shake. Shake. Shake my sillies out. Wiggle my waggles away." You can make up a song with your child like "I'm gonna stomp, stomp, stomp my whineys out. Stomp. Stomp. Stomp my whineys out. Wiggle my waggles away." Sing it with your child when she uses a whiney voice. Or if you have an older child, develop a rap song together.

**Option 8.** Come up with a hand signal or "sign language" that signals to your child to stop using a whiney voice. This can be particularly helpful when you have company and don't want to directly reprimand your child in front of others.

**Option 9.** If you think that frustration, boredom, sadness or some other emotion may be the root cause of the whining, help the child identify the feeling. i.e. "I was wondering if you were feeling kind of frustrated right now?"

Pick on or two strategies to try and consistently use them until you get the results you hope for.

**Byline:** Toni Schutta is a Parent Coach and Licensed Psychologist with 17 years experience helping families find solutions that work. To receive the **free report "The 7 Worst Mistakes Parents Make (and How to Avoid Them!)"** visit <http://www.getparentinghelpnow.com/7mistakessignup.html>. Toni also offers a complimentary 30-minute "Happier Family for You" Planning Session, that's done by telephone, at your convenience. Please contact Toni at [toni@getparentinghelpnow.com](mailto:toni@getparentinghelpnow.com) to set up your session.