

397 06/04/07 Respecting the need for quiet when someone is on the phone

Let's look at another behavior we might want for our child. The three steps to success are deciding if the behavior is appropriate, setting a goal and making a plan to reach the goal.

The first step is very important. Some behaviors we might want in our children are not really for their benefit. When I have my grandsons here, they play fun, loud games as boys often do. If I were to decide that they needed to be quiet when visiting me, I think the visits would become infrequent. Being quiet at all times is not appropriate. Remember that the desired character trait should be for the good of the child. Our children only need to know how to be quiet and when it is necessary.

What parent has not been on an important phone call when a noisy game or a sibling argument has made it impossible to hear? Is it appropriate to expect a child to respect a parent's need for quiet while on the phone? Yes, because that is part of respecting the rights of others. Being respectfully quiet while someone is on the phone is the goal.

The plan for teaching that behavior can include letting the child know a phone call is about to be made and, for unplanned calls, having a signal for quiet. Again, once there has been time to learn the concept there should be zero-tolerance for disobedience.

It is much easier to enforce rules if the child knows what is expected of him ahead of time. If you have an important call to make, simply explain to your child that you will be on the phone in the other room and need him to be quiet during that time. When the call is completed, be sure to thank him for being quiet.

He needs a method such as laying his hand on your arm to let you know if he has a genuine need to interrupt your conversation. This is especially helpful if you have long conversations!

If the call comes unexpectedly, have a prepared signal that you can make to the child to let him know that you need quiet. Do this before the noise erupts. You might just walk into his presence and point to the phone you are using. Then leave the room so that he only needs to be quiet, not silent.

These simple techniques will make life easier for you and teach your child important life lessons.

