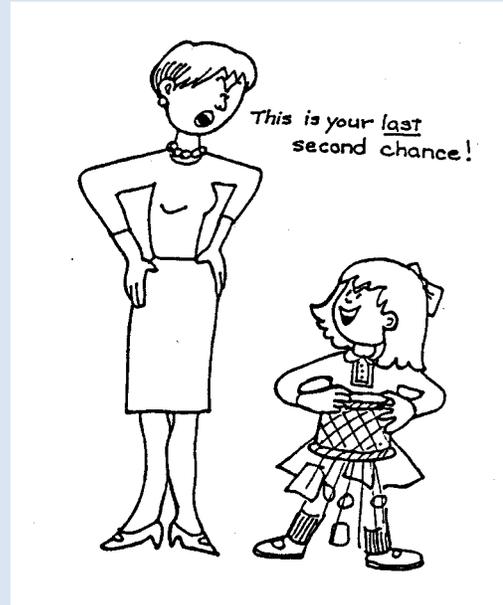## Mean What You Say Without being Mean - CUT IT OUT!

Are you full of idle threats? "If you don't clean up I'm giving your toys to charity! Now this is your last second chance!" Do you make requests over and over again without actually meaning it? "Okay Jason, one more time around the campsite on your bike and that's it. Okay Jason, one more time……one more time." If you wonder why your kids don't listen to you, this could be why. If you don't say what you mean, you really should, CUT IT OUT! The first ticket out of this wishy-washy behaviour is to think about what you are asking of your child. Is the request important enough to make? Maybe you like it when Jason occupies himself riding his bike while you relax. Does it have to do with your child's safety? Does it affect the well being of others? Is it important enough for you to mean what you say? If not, don't say it, otherwise you are teaching your children not to listen to you when you don't take it seriously. The second consideration is if you do take action and follow through to ask yourself, am I still respecting my child, being fair and being reasonable? If you can't answer yes to this, don't do it otherwise you are teaching your child not to trust or respect you.

How to mean what you say without being mean:

- Present your concerns and involve the child in decision making. "I notice it's getting late and I'd like you ready for bed at 9:00, I think two more times around the campsite, what do you think is fair?"
- When a limit or decision has been made, simply follow through without arguing or reasoning. "We decided on three more times, time is up."
- Offer empathy without feeling sorry for your child or giving in. "I know you would love to keep riding and your upset that play time is over."
- Get serious not angry and show your intent with your body language.
- Make your follow through related, reasonable and respectful. (The bike gets put away for the night, the tone is friendly or neutral and you don't stack on a bunch of silly punishments.)

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