



**Parenting  
Children with  
Health Issues**



Essential Tools, Tips, & Tactics for Being a Great Parent when Every Moment Matters

# **Winning With Cystic Fibrosis™**

## **Tools, Tips, and Tactics for Raising Healthier Kids**

### **Parent Notes**

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# NOTES


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# **The "Magic" Formula for Positive Parenting**

1. Use encouragement and positive reinforcement often. Notice what your child does right more than wrong by at least 5 to 1.
2. Share control with choices and questions; Educate about consequences.
3. Use problem solving to solve problems, create agreements and work through areas of disagreement.
4. Set limits using conditional yes-es, enforceable statements and choices.
5. Neutralize arguing with empathy and one-liners.
6. Use empathy and consequences to enforce the limits. Follow through with *action*, not words.


## **Notes:**

## Three Types of Overindulgence



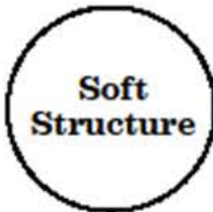
### Too Much

Giving **too much** or too many things includes not only toys and clothing, but anything that costs money; sports equipment, lessons, entertainment, vacations, junk food, tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs. In addition to giving too much or too many things that cost money, too much can also mean allocating a disproportionate amount of family resources to one or more children. Often the “too much” form of overindulgence can appear to meet a child’s needs, but does not. As a result, the child experiences scarcity in the midst of plenty. With a constant barrage of too many and too much, children often experience a sense of scarcity because they fail to learn the vital skill of ascertaining what is enough.



### Over-Nurturing

All children need nurturing in order to survive. **Overnurturing** is doing things for children that they could or should be doing for themselves or keeping them from learning to handle situations they should be mastering. It is smothering children with too much care and attention. The result can be a child whose role in life is to be cute or helpless or manipulative. Overnurturing is not about giving too much love. There is no such thing as too much love. Loving your children allows them to grow. But true love does not hover or intrude or deprive a child of the opportunity to reach out, to learn new skills, to feel the thrill of achievement, or to experience consequences. Love does not continue to do things for a child that are no longer appropriate for his or her age.



### Soft Structure

**Soft structure** is giving children too much freedom and license. It can mean giving children choices and experiences that are not appropriated for their age, interests, or talents. It can also be not insisting that they learn important life-skills. Soft structure can include forgetting that adults are supposed to run the family, and giving that job to the children, either directly or by default. Letting children make decisions that should fall to adults gives children a false sense of power or an overblown sense of responsibility. Not requiring children to do chores deprives them of the opportunity to contribute to the family’s success and well-being.



This handout is from the **Family Information Services** 2004 Professional Resource Materials. It part of the supplement to *The Three Types of Overindulgence*, an interview with Drs. Jean Malley Clarke, Connie Dawson, and David Bredehoft based on their book, *How Much Is Enough?* Reprint permission granted exclusively to members of Family Information Services.

# Why Parents Overindulge

Since overindulgence is a form of neglect and causes such pain, inconvenience, and distress later in life, why would parents do that? We often hear that is because of affluence, or that parents give what they didn't have. The overindulgence studies indicated that overindulging can happen at any income level.

Take the following true-false quiz and guess which reasons were reported in the overindulgence research. Circle T if you believe the reason was true or F if you believe the reason was not reported.

- T F Guilt - a little guilt/a little gift
- T F Parents were overindulged
- T F Came from scarcity
- T F Masking favoritism
- T F To compete with other adults
- T F To control kids
- T F To "make smooths" - fear confrontation or rejection
- T F To project a parent vision of the child
- T F To feel like I am a good parent
- T F No skill to set limits
- T F Trying to be fair
- T F Competition with spouse over control of child
- T F Taking path of least resistance
- T F Quick fix for whining
- T F To cover conflicting parenting goals
- T F Seduction – to be popular - for needs of seducer
- T F Compensating for abusive parent
- T F Compensating for absent parent
- T F Buying love by absent parent
- T F Buying favors
- T F Child idolatry
- T F Build parents' own self-esteem - "What a good parent I am"
- T F Media programming
- T F To make child happy
- T F To set up peer group competition among children
- T F Compete with parent peer group
- T F Afraid of child's anger
- T F For a child who is "less than"
- T F Giving love without balancing it with rules
- T F Projects parents' needs onto children – parent didn't get to do hockey camp, be captain
- T F Contrary parenting - to oppose spouse or grandparents
- T F Want child to have what they didn't have
- T F Don't know child development
- T F Yield to pressure of media or children
- T F Habitually codependent with everyone
- T F To keep child quiet because spouse gets violent



*All of the reasons were reported in research done by Jean Illsley Clarke and Dr. David Bredehoft.*

Quiz from *Growing Up Again* by Jean Illsley Clarke & Connie Dawson, Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1998.



Note from Lisa: This is very important for our kids with CF. The way to combat overindulgence is to set firm limits, learn how to say no (and make it stick), and allow children to work for the things they want.

## Effects of Overindulgence

Children who are overindulged can have difficulties in many areas of life, both when they are young and when they become adults. They may have:

- ✓ Trouble learning how to delay gratification.
- ✓ Trouble giving up status as the constant center of attention.
- ✓ Trouble becoming competent in:
  - ♦ Everyday skills.
  - ♦ Self-care skills.
  - ♦ Skills for relating with others.
- ✓ Trouble taking personal responsibility.
- ✓ Trouble developing a sense of personal identity.
- ✓ Trouble knowing what is enough.
- ✓ Trouble knowing what is normal for other people.



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## Love and Logic Solution:

# Three Types of Parents

CONSULTANT	HELICOPTER	DRILL SERGEANT
<i>This Love and Logic parent provides guidance and consultant services for children.</i>	<i>This parent hovers over children and rescues them from the hostile world in which they live.</i>	<i>This parent commands and directs the lives of children.</i>
1. The Love and Logic parent provides messages of personal worth and strength	1. provides messages of weakness and low personal worth	1. provides messages of low personal worth and resistance
2. The Love and Logic parent very seldom mentions responsibilities	2. makes excuses for the child, but complains about mishandled responsibilities	2. lots of demands and expectations about responsibility
3. The Love and Logic parent demonstrates how to take care of self and be responsible	3. "takes on" the responsibility of the child	3. tells the child how he should handle responsibility
4. The Love and Logic parent shares personal feelings about own performance and responsibilities	4. protects the child from any possible negative feelings	4. tells the child how he should feel
5. The Love and Logic parent provides and helps child explore alternatives and then allows child to make his own decision	5. makes decisions for the child	5. provides absolutes, "This is the decision you should make!"
6. The Love and Logic parent provides "time frames" in which child may complete responsibilities	6. provides no structure, but complains, "After all I've done for you..."	6. demands that jobs or responsibilities be done now

*continued on page 2*



## Three Types of Parents, continued.

CONSULTANT	HELICOPTER	DRILL SERGEANT
7. The Love and Logic parent models doing a good job, finishing, cleaning up, feeling good about it	7. whines and uses guilt, "When are you ever going to learn. I always have to clean up after you."	7. issues orders and threats, "You get that room cleaned up or else..."
8. The Love and Logic parent often asks self, "Who owns the problem?" helps the child explore solutions to his problem	8. whines and complains about having an irresponsible child who causes "me" much work and responsibility	8. takes over ownership of the problem using threats and orders to solve the problem
9. The Love and Logic parent uses lots of actions, but very few words	9. uses lots of words and actions which rescue or indicate that the child is not capable or responsible	9. uses lots of harsh words, very few actions
10. The Love and Logic parent allows child to experience life's natural consequences and allows them to serve as the teacher	10. protects child from natural consequences, uses guilt as the teacher	10. uses punishment; pain and humiliation can serve as the teacher



*The Love and Logic People*  
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## Using Choices at Home

Are you going to \_\_\_ or \_\_\_ ?

Would you like \_\_\_ or \_\_\_?

Do you plan to \_\_\_ or \_\_\_?

Should we \_\_\_ or \_\_\_?

Will you be \_\_\_ or \_\_\_ ?

Which would you prefer: \_\_\_ or \_\_\_?

Name an area that you are having power struggles with your child. Examples: homework, chores, getting up on time, doing breathing treatments, etc.

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List at least three different choices you can give your child BEFORE you get resistance:

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Get two more possible choices from your neighbor:

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Put a star next to the top two choices that you think have the best chance of being successful. Share them with your neighbor and commit to trying them out this week with your child.

## ✓ Skill Builder Exercise

### *Enforceable Statements*

Listed below are some examples of enforceable vs. unenforceable statements to get you started. Then, you'll get to practice a few. There are many "right" answers to each of these, be creative. Remember: *Never tell a resistant child what to do. Describe what you will do or allow instead.*

#### **Unenforceable**

Do your breathing treatments.  
Take your enzymes before you eat.  
You can't go until you finish your meds.  
Eat your food!

#### **Enforceable**

I'll turn on the TV when you start your nebulizer.  
I'll serve dinner after you take your enzymes.  
I will take you when you finish your meds.  
I give treats to kids who eat their dinner.

Now, it's your turn. Turn the following unenforceable statements into enforceable ones.

1. Unenforceable: Quit complaining about the food and just eat it.

Enforceable: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Unenforceable: How many times do I have to tell you to pick up your stuff?

Enforceable: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Unenforceable: Put that toy back on the shelf!

Enforceable: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Unenforceable: Get your enzymes packed up *now*! We gotta go!

Enforceable: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Unenforceable: Take your medicine. Otherwise, you're going to get sick.

Enforceable: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Unenforceable: Stop yelling at me.

Enforceable: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: How we say these words is just as important as what we say. *Remember to be kind, firm and sincere.*

# Short-Term Questions

How do I make my child “mind?”

How do I make my child understand “no?”

How do I get my child to listen to me?

How do I make this problem go away?

# Long-Term Questions

How do I help my child feel capable?

How do I help my child feel belonging and significance?

How I do help my child learn respect, cooperation,  
and problem-solving skills?

How do I get into my child's world and understand his or her  
developmental process?

How do I use every problem as an opportunity for learning  
— for my children and for me?



This handout is part of May 2001, *FIS Methods & Materials* Section, by Dr. Jane Nelsen.  
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Whether children need to pick up their toys, brush their teeth or take medication, gaining cooperation is a critical skill set. In their haste to get a job done quickly, adults can sound more like a drill sergeant than a parent: "Pick up your toys", "Brush your teeth" and "Take your medicine." When kids don't comply, the result can be power struggles, nagging and reminding, threats and warnings, and frustration all around.

While it may take a little longer at first, using skills to gain cooperation will save time in the long run as well as build positive relationships. Here are several ways to engage cooperation. Keep in mind that having age and developmentally appropriate expectations are an important part of gaining cooperation.

### **Give choices.**

"It's time to take your medicine. Would you like to take it with apple juice or grape juice?" "Would you like to do your medical treatments before or after breakfast?" "Would you rather pick up the puzzle or pick up the crayons? You decide."

### **Ask questions:**

"What is it you don't like about the chicken?" "What is your plan for \_\_\_\_?" "When will you be doing \_\_\_\_?" "What was our agreement?" Questions can be very effective as long as you don't act like an interrogator or a prosecutor. Be genuinely curious and interested. Be careful about "why" questions. They tend to put a person on the defensive, especially if asked in a critical tone of voice. "Why weren't you home at 11:00?" can be re-phrased to "What was our agreement about curfew?"

### **Point out ways to be helpful.**

"It would be helpful if you could put the crayons in the box." "It would be helpful if you could get your medications ready to go." "It would be helpful if you could move over so your brother can sit there, too."

### **State what your child can do (instead of what he or she can't do).**

"Feel free to play inside as long as you don't shout." "You may have a snack after you take your medicine." "You are welcome to go to your friend's house after your \_\_\_\_ (homework, chores, medication) is done."

### **Reframe requests into the positive.**

Ask for the behavior you want instead of telling kids what you don't want. Kids do better when we use positives. So instead of saying "Don't yell" try "Please talk quietly." Or instead of "Don't run" try "Please walk". Or instead of "Don't forget your medicine" try "Remember your medicine".

### **Pay attention to good behavior; focus on your child's strengths.**

One of the most powerful ways to gain cooperation, motivate and build relationships is to focus on your child's strengths instead of trying to fix weaknesses. "I like how you are sharing with your sister." "You are ready to leave for school on time, way to go." "I appreciate how you \_\_\_\_."

Name your child's strength; describe what you see without judging or evaluating: "I see that you cleaned up the table already. That shows responsibility." "I noticed that you got your pills ready for the morning. That's planning-ahead." Experts suggest that you give *at least* five positives for every one criticism.

### **Describe the problem.**

"I see toys all over the floor that have not been put away." "It's getting late and homework is not done yet." "We have to be at \_\_\_ by \_\_\_ but your medical treatments aren't done yet."

### **Clearly state your expectations.**

"I expect you to stay with me when we go shopping." "I expect you to finish your homework before you watch TV or play video games." "I expect you to take your medicine before you \_\_\_." "You may change your clothes after dinner." "You may get your crayons after you put away the puzzle."

### **Describe what you feel.**

"I feel frustrated when clothes are left all over the floor." "I feel sad when you don't take the medicine your body needs to be healthy." "I feel upset when you talk to me that way."

Keep the focus on yourself and your feelings. Address the unacceptable behavior; don't criticize your child's character. This approach assumes your child cares about your feelings and should not be used as a way to manipulate or "guilt" your child into compliance.

### **Educate; give information.**

"Toys left outside get dirty and broken." "Shouting hurts my ears." "Throwing toys at your sister will hurt her." "Skipping your medicine will \_\_\_."

### **Check out your child's understanding.**

"What needs to happen before \_\_\_?" "What should you be doing right now in order to \_\_\_?" "What do you think will happen if \_\_\_?" "What are the steps for \_\_\_?" "What did the doctor say about \_\_\_?" "What did your teacher say about \_\_\_?" "When is bedtime?" If your child says, "I don't know" you can ask: "Would you like help remembering?"

### **Use "If, Then" to describe consequences.**

Using "if, then" is a great way to set limits as well as teach children about consequences.

- "If you don't take your medicine, then you might get a \_\_\_ (tummy ache)." Or: "If you take your medicine, then you won't get a tummy ache."
- "If you don't pick up your toys, then I will put them away for three days." Or: "If you pick up your toys, you will get to play with them tomorrow."
- "If you don't use your quiet voice inside, then I will ask you to go outside." Or: "If you are loud inside, I will ask you to go outside."
- "If you don't take your \_\_\_ medicine, then we won't go to \_\_\_ because \_\_\_." Example: If you don't take your asthma medicine, then we can't go to the racetrack because the dust might trigger an asthma attack." OR "If you take your \_\_\_ medicine, then we can go to \_\_\_ because \_\_\_." Example: If you take your asthma medicine, then we can go to the racetrack because the dust won't trigger an asthma attack." Note: Try to word the phrases positively whenever possible. Also, young children don't understand contractions.

### **Use routine charts.**

Many problems in the home can be solved with simple organizational skills. Routine charts, created in either words or pictures, help create structure and clarify the steps to complete a task. Morning and bedtime routines and medical tasks can be broken down into small steps. Instead of reminding your child to do a step or task, ask: "What is the next step on your \_\_\_ chart?"



### **Use please and thank you.**

It's human nature to respond positively when someone is polite. And when you model using manners, your children will use them, too. "Please pick up your toys before dinner. Thank you." "Please get started on your medical treatments before it gets too late. Thank you." "Please get your homework finished before we go to the store. Thank you."

### **Invite cooperation.**

"I need your help. Can you figure out what would be helpful to \_\_\_\_ (leave on time) right now?" "Let's figure out a plan to \_\_\_\_." "How do you think we can \_\_\_\_?"

### **Problem solve together.**

Even young children can learn to solve problems with your guidance. Start with empathy for their feelings if they are upset. Then describe the problem they are having, the rule they are breaking or the issue that needs to be addressed. Ask them to come up with possible solutions and explain the consequences of those solutions. Help them if they want your help. Generate possibilities together and make a plan to solve the problem. Provide encouragement, love and support while also allowing your child to solve his or her own problems without your interference. The key is to be a loving guide and coach, not a "fix and repair" person.

### **Use "Grandma's Rule".**

This is a variation on the If, Then strategy. The not-so-fun task gets done before the fun activity. "If you get your homework done, then we can go to the park." "If you take your medicine, then you can have ice-cream." "First we put away the crayons, and then we can play Candy Land." "After you clear the table, you can have 20 minutes of computer time."

### **Use signals, short phrases or a word instead of lectures.**

"Quiet voice." "Jacket." "Medication before food." "Stop." Pre-discussed non-verbal signals can also be used: a hand raised, a touch on the arm, or a time out signal. A hand raised to the mouth might signal "medication before food" so a child is not embarrassed by a reminder in public.

### **State a rule or condition.**

"This is the only clean pair of shorts you have right now." "When it gets dark outside, it is time to come in." "The doctor said that your medicine is to be taken at 6:00."

If you have already explained the reasoning for the rule, avoid defending, re-explaining or arguing about the rule. Simply restate it: "We've already discussed why. It is time to come in when it gets dark."

### **Create agreements.**

1. Offer a choice or ask a question: "Would like to do your medical treatments now or right after dinner?" or "When are you planning to do your medical treatments tonight?"
2. State the agreement: "Okay, so you agreed to do your medical treatments right after dinner." (Shake hands and grin.)
3. If your child does not keep the agreement, you can ask: "What was our agreement?"
4. If your child still does not keep the agreement, follow through with empathy and consequences.