



Talking back is a normal way for children to practice being assertive.

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Softening sassy back talk

Talking back is a normal behavior for children

Most children at any age will learn to talk back to adults. Talking back is a very normal way for children to practice being assertive. They need to experiment with language and limits in order to learn them.

Children may not realize they are being disrespectful with back talk. They may believe they are expressing a point of view about a situation and not know fully how to express

appropriately that point of view.

Children that talk back may be testing parents or caregivers because they feel safe with those adults. They feel confident that they will be loved no matter what they say.

Children who hear a lot of disrespectful talk will learn to talk disrespectfully.

What parents can do

- Give your children a choice when they are being disrespectful. "You can talk to me respectfully or don't talk to me at all." Tell your children you will leave the room if they are going to talk back or talk rudely and that you want to listen to them when they can talk politely.
- Always speak respectfully to your child and model behavior you would like to see. Your child learns from your example. It is important to speak respectfully to your child.
- Ignore back talk. When your child is talking back to get attention, ignore it.
- Realize that shouting back at your child does no good. If your child's back talk makes you angry, physically separate yourself from the child to calm down.
- Avoid power struggles. Power struggles can create more back talk in the future.
- Make your expectations for respectful language clear to your child

While these tips will not cure sassy back talk overnight, they will, with consistent practice over time, curb your child's propensity to speak rudely.