
Handout 8: Mediating Messages

Instructions: Using the situations below, discuss the following questions:

1. What message is the child getting from his or her experience?
2. How do you feel about it?
3. What can you say or do to help mediate the message the child received and at the same time strengthen the message you want to support?

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- ◆ A young child screams a four-letter word at her sister. The parent has never used the word in the children's presence and is shocked to hear it.
 - ◆ While watching TV, the children watch a beer commercial where everyone is having a good time on a beach. It looks as if the way to be happy and "cool" is to drink that kind of beer.
 - ◆ A four-year-old is sitting at breakfast looking at the back of a cereal box, which advertises a new toy weapon for only four boxtops and \$9.99. "I need this...let's get it now!" he exclaims.
 - ◆ A child's favorite neighbor is arrested for a drug-related incident. The child is confused...he insists that his friend is not "bad."
 - ◆ The television news reports the death of a child. "People don't die until they are very, very old," your child insists.
 - ◆ A child comes home singing the words to a popular song with sexually explicit lyrics.
 - ◆ A toddler comes home from a babysitter where she was pushed by an older child. She immediately pushes her baby brother.
 - ◆ A child, having eaten food at a friend's house that is never eaten at home, demands that food for dinner.

Think about examples from your own experience that might require mediation. Use the group to help think of different mediation strategies you might use.