

# WORK TOGETHER

It can be difficult for both parents to be on the same page when they raise their children

Ever had a child who keeps asking for a favour or a treat until they get the response they want?

Some kids are adept at getting their own way at home. They generally use one of two methods to get their own way. They may either nag or hound you until they get an affirmative or they will seek out an adult who will give them the answer they want.

## METHOD 1 - PERSISTENCE

The first method, which is based on persistence, is generally very effective to use with tired parents and sole parents who are more susceptible to this type of behaviour

“All right have the treat. Anything for some peace and quiet” is a response that most people who have spent time around children are familiar with.

## METHOD 2 - MANIPULATION

The second method is a little more devious but very effective and usually occurs in dual parent families. You know the situation. A child's request for a treat, favour or outing is turned down for good reason (‘No Jessica you can't have an ice

cream now. Wait until after dinner’) but the child goes to the other parent who may well give them the affirmative they are seeking.

Minor happening but very irritating. These situations are indicative of two people who are operating on different parenting planes. If it happens every now and again then it is no big deal. However if one parent is always granting a child his or her wishes without consultation or thought of how the other parent thinks or what they are doing then it is probably time to step back and reflect on how you can both work together. If it happens frequently your child will learn how to play one parent off against the other or manipulate situations until they get what they want.

It may sound sinister but its not. It's just how we human beings tend to think and behave. This type of parental manipulation can occur for many reasons. Either it is due to different standards of behaviour or thoughts about bringing up children or a lack of understanding about what has happened in a child's day.

## HOW TO WORK TOGETHER

- **Communicate.** Regardless of the reason it means that parents need to communicate and also get the message across that it is taboo to keep seeking out a parent until they get the response they want.
- **Be firm.** Parents should be firm with a child who goes to another parent in search of a yes after they have received a knock back from another.
- **Defer to your partner** whenever children catch you unawares with a request. “Okay, I'll just check with dad and I'll get back to you.” This strategy can be a little wearing and even artificial but it demonstrates that you are double act.

Most dual parents play good cop/bad cop where one is more the disciplinarian or hard-line manager and the other is the play director. That tends to be the way of families. This is wearing on the bad cop so it helps if you can swap roles occasionally (or even backbones) and give the other parent a break.



Parenting *ideas*  
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