

## **From Innocence to Entitlement**

Raising children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century presents many unique challenges. How does one know if he/she is parenting correctly when circumstances change so rapidly? Many youth today expect to have the latest and greatest and parents want the best for their children. While our intentions are good, providing our children and teens with too many things and the best available may actually short circuit good character development.

Youth who learn to accept no, delay gratification and/or help contribute to the cost of “wants” are the lucky ones. They learn the value of impulse control, team work and the dollar. What’s the bottom line? Parents should always meet needs but set limits on wants. Your child will thank you later and so will their future spouse and employer! Besides... Youth who get too many wants without accountability are not a lot of fun to be around.

### **What can parents do to help prevent entitlement in their children and teens?**

**1) Set limits on wants and stick with it!** Don’t let your youth argue or manipulate you into changing your mind. Say, “No and I love you too much to argue.” Repeat as needed. You may need to walk away from the arguing child.

**2) Have them, “share the cost” to purchase wants.** Set a limit on what you are willing to contribute when your kid wants the newest cell phone. This provides a valuable “cost of living” reality check for your kid. Most parents find that if the youth participates in the cost, they appreciate and take better care of the purchase.

**3) Make sure your children are doing their “fair share” around the house.** These age-appropriate chores help your son or daughter feel like a valued member of the family. Helping with chores also teaches valuable life skills.

**4) Use caution when paying children to do chores** unless it’s something out of the ordinary or they need to take on something extra to earn some cash. When we pay children for making family contributions we take away their opportunity to feel good about helping the team, instead they think, “I’m doing this because I’m getting paid.”

**5) Have your child say please and thank you, say please and thank you to them.** Also teaching your child to write a thank you note shows him/her the importance of expressing gratitude to another person.

These are a few suggestions to avoid the entitlement trap. For more information on preparing your children for success in the real world, visit [LSCARES.org](http://LSCARES.org).

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