

End of the Day Whining: Two tips to help

The adult world can leave you exhausted at the end of the day. All you want to do is decompress; yet your child wants 100% of your attention, and the evening arguing begins.

Mom needs to get dinner ready or bedtime will be late and dad needs to send one more email before work tomorrow. Your child doesn't care about that, she doesn't know anything about the adult world, she lives in the present moment and wants your attention now. And *now* the whining and yelling begins.

Most children can be whiney at the end of day. They've held it together emotionally all day without you and now they're home where it's safe and the emotions begin to roll. However parents have been in the adult world all day and have little energy left for any whining.

Here are two tips, one feeds attention and one feeds the tummy, both help change *End of the Day Whining*.

- *Literally feed end of the day whining—don't starve it.*

What if you began by feeding your child ahead of dinner instead of insisting she stop whining now!

We all know mealtime can be the only focused time a family has all day, and I'm not asking you to give that up, I'm suggesting a change in how it goes. Sometimes hunger causes whining and food is the only solution.

- *Be proactive create a "dinner box".*

Have a container waiting in the refrigerator so she can have food as soon as she gets home. Stock the box ahead of time with things like cheese, yogurt, lunch meat, tuna, veggies and dip, fruit, cheese and crackers, cheese tortillas, or leftovers. What ever works for your child, as long as it's healthy.

- *Won't that spoil her dinner?*

No, it becomes the bulk of her dinner. It's simply feeding her the way you used too when she was a baby, before you eat. Now she's older and can handle eating as she does the next tip and while you continue to make the family meal. Also, your child's stomach is the size of her fist. Toddlers and preschoolers don't eat as much as adults do, and most don't enjoy complex adult food; they're natural grazers and prefer small portions many times a day of the foods already mentioned.

- *What about family time?*

Eating together each night is very important, but it's not the eating of the food that's so important, it's the time spent together. Now that your child has been partially fed invite her to finish dinner with the family or have her join you for desert. This way you get to have a calmer family meal with less whining.

- *Feed the need for attention—but on your terms.*

This tip will fill both of your needs, she gets attention and you continue making dinner. Consider having a special seat in the kitchen called "time with me seat"? That way your child can be with you—but not under foot. Have your child sit in her "special" seat as she eats from the "dinner box" and let her eat slowly as she tells you about her day. Begin by asking her direct questions to get things started and then let her go on about anything. This exchange fills her up with the attention she's craving and doesn't force you stop the flow of family life as you provide one-on-one time.

Sharon Silver is the founder and director of ProActive Parenting, www.proactiveparenting.net a site offering downloadable seminars to help parents switch from punishment to discipline as they deal with everyday toddler and preschooler behavior.

