

Habit 1: Be Proactive

Be Proactive means to take responsibility for your choices and behaviors. Habit 1 is the key to all of the other habits, that's why it comes first. Be Proactive says "I am in charge of my own life. I am responsible for whether I am happy or sad. I can choose how I react to other people or situations. I am in the driver's seat." Young children can easily learn to understand that different choices yield different results. The goal is to teach them to think about those results before they decide what to do. Discussions can focus on taking care of themselves, taking care of their things, reacting or not reacting to others' behavior, planning ahead, and thinking about what the right thing to do is. With your child, think of ways to Be Proactive at home.

Most of us react to a situation immediately, without taking time to think about the results of our actions. Part of Be Proactive is being able to stop and think before we act. With your child, do some role-playing to practice the skill of stopping and thinking in different situations. Your goal in these role plays is to encourage your child to stop and think before reacting. Use the following ideas to get started, and then think of some that can be immediately applicable to your child's life.

- (In this role play, you should play the part of your child's friend) Say that you have a new best friend who lives close to your house and you don't want to play with him or her anymore. Apologize and then wait for your child's reaction.
- (In this role-play, you should be your child's sibling) Tell your child that you broke his or her favorite toy by accident. Tell him or her that you don't think it's a very big deal because he or she has many toys.
- (In this role play, you should play the part of your child and your child should play the part of you) Tell your child that you are "soooooo bored" and there is nothing fun to do. Complain that no one wants to play and that he or she (as the parent) needs to amuse you.
- Read Chapter 1 of *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids* book with your child and then complete the Parent's Corner.

