

Introduction

They're Unionized . . . and Growing Stronger

Your kids have a game plan to drive you bonkers. But you don't have to let them call the shots. I've got a game plan guaranteed to work. Every time.

Your kids have a game plan to drive you bonkers. It all started back with Eve birthing two brothers—Cain and Abel—who were as different as day and night and couldn't get along. And we all know how that story ended up.

There's always at least one kid in your home who is determined to go a certain direction—a direction you don't want him or her to go. What's worse, your kids are unionized . . . and growing stronger. In today's society, children even shorter than a yardstick are calling the shots. They're part of what I call the "entitlement group"—they expect anything and everything good to come their way, with no work on their part, just because they exist. In their eyes, the world (and Mom and Dad) *owes* them. Some of them are part of the ankle-biter battalion; others have graduated to emeritus status and are holding down the hormone group division.

You know all about that, because that's why you've picked up this guide. It isn't always the big things that wear you down and make you say, "I've had it!" It's the constant battles with attitudes and behaviors like eye rolling, talking back, fighting with siblings, giving the silent treatment, and slamming doors. It's the statements like, "You can't make me do it!" and "I hate you!" flung in your face.

If you want to see some things—or a lot of things—change in your house, and you long for a better way of doing life in your home, *Have a New Kid by Friday Participant's Guide* and the accompanying DVD will help you accomplish just that. The principles are simple. Anyone can follow them. But they're not easy. They take willpower—yours. No

2. When have your kids starred in their own “dog and pony show”? Explain. How did you respond then? How might you handle your children’s upcoming dog and pony shows differently?

3. If you’re married, do you and your spouse tend to be on the same page in your interactions with your children? Or is one of you pulling one direction and the other another? How might pulling together in the same direction benefit your kids—and your marriage?

If you’re divorced, how might you and your ex (if your ex is still involved in your children’s lives) both take a step in the same direction for the benefit of your children?

If you’re a single parent, how might you gather a support group of like-minded people around you?

4. Can you identify a recent situation where your child viewed reward as his or her right? What did your child say? How did you respond?

5. Should that situation come up again with your child, what might you do differently, knowing what you know from Dr. Leman?

Taking It Deeper

Nothing in life is a free ride, and the sooner your children learn that, the better. Each person is accountable, regardless of age, for what comes out of his or her mouth. And homes should be based on the cornerstones of mutual respect, love, and accountability. There is no entitlement. If you play the entitlement game in your home, you'll create BratZ—with a capital Z.

1. What adjectives would you use to describe the way you feel after doing battle with your kids?

6. If you stick to your no, what do you think will happen the next time your child plays the entitlement game?

7. Philippians 2:3 says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." How might believing in and acting upon these words transform your family's interactions?

8. If your child didn't turn in a paper on time, what would you do—and why? For example:
 - Call the teacher to apologize that your daughter didn't get the paper in on time, and ask for an extension. Then push your daughter to finish it that night. (End result: your daughter screams at you and slams her bedroom door; you get angry and then feel bad.)
 - Email the teacher and tell her it's your fault—your daughter has had too full of a schedule—and ask for an extension. Then write the paper yourself that night so your daughter can turn it in the next day.
 - Write a note to the teacher and drop it off at school: "My daughter is late again on handing her paper in, and she has no excuse. I'd be grateful if you would give her the maximum deduction in her grade for lateness so she'll understand there are consequences to her actions."

9. Do you tend to snowplow your kid's road in life—making too many decisions for her, giving him too many choices, letting her off the hook, or making excuses when he's irresponsible? If so, what has been the result in your child's life and in yours?

10. Ecclesiastes 5:19 says, "When God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God." What is the source of happiness in this verse? How does trying to boost a child's self-esteem actually backfire?

Your job as a parent is not to create a happy child. If your child is temporarily unhappy, when she does choose to put a happy face back on, life will be better for all of you. After all, the long-term goal is to make her a responsible adult who doesn't think her happiness is the only thing that's important in life.

Many of us have unwittingly led our kids to think they're in the driver's seat of life, and that everyone else has to do their bidding—moms in particular. If you're a mom and you feel like a slave, exhausted by the end of the day, you especially need this participant's guide. You deserve more, and so do your kids.

If you want your child to emerge a healthy, contributing member of your family and society, *Have a New Kid by Friday Participant's Guide* will help you do just that—produce the kind of adult you'll be proud to call your son or daughter now and down the road. It'll ratchet down the

stress level in your home and give you freedom you've never experienced before in your parenting.

Remember

- Your kids' game plan is to call the shots. But you don't have to let them.
- Nothing in life is a free ride. The sooner your kids learn that, the better.
- Your job as a parent isn't to create a happy child. It's to create a responsible adult.

My Game Plan for Today

1. Identify which child most needs to become a new kid by Friday.
(Hint: When you think of this kid, your blood pressure skyrockets.)

2. Commit to the five-day Monday-to-Friday process.

Aha Moments