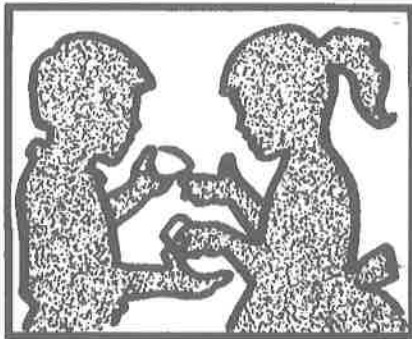


Grade 1 Week 26



Miser, magpie, swapper

A first grader continues to crave possessions. He still hoards things: he is a miser. He may be so "overcome" with desire for something that in his impulsiveness he "takes" a small trinket. He is a magpie.

There is still another side: he is a swapper. He has found that "swapping" is another way to acquire possessions. Here again is demonstrated the to-and-fro swings of this age level.

Whereas he is almost greedy for possessions, he may also overdo his generosity—and primarily because of a greater interest in giving than receiving.

Your child really needs to be protected from giving away his really valuable possessions. So you may need to step in diplomatically and say, "He can't swap this. It was a gift from his grandmother."

Miser, magpie, swapper. Ah, you are so interesting, frustrating—and lovable. You are an enigma.

Why is he rude?

If you have your child in any kind of day care arrangement, you will certainly hear, sooner or later, that he was "fresh, nasty, insulting, impudent, rude, and argumentative."

This happens to single parents raising their children alone. It happens to two-parent families where both parents work, and it happens to families where one parent is home most of the time and the day care is only occasional.

Why?

It's because the child feels that his parents—his mother, especially—are the only ones who have the right to correct him.

When caregivers—even close relatives—take on rights the child feels belong only to his mother or father, he reacts—and quickly. Mother and father have the right to "make him do things," to talk to him about "bad things he has done," and tell him what he can and can't do. But he resists this mightily from anyone else.

Mothers are privileged people. Mother is actually the one person who is his real support. A relative or baby-sitter may expect a reply like, "I won't. You're not my mother. You can't make me."

It's all so logical to the youngster. "They" are not the authority—mother and father are. Don't chastise him with an angry reaction when this happens. Try to keep the relationship intact. Even though he growing away from his parents a bit every day, he will need to know you are there a while longer.

You may think that it's not good for him to get by with such "smart backtalk." Punishment by the caregiver will not be logical to the child. You, the authority, should give the punishment.

Furthermore, the rude incident will have happened long before you return home. As far as your child is concerned, it never happened. It is better to talk to the caregiver about how to frame requests, not demands, in a way which will get a positive response. Remember, this is a temporary situation, and it will pass.

"Never fear spoiling children by making them happy. Happiness is the atmosphere in which all good affections grow."

—Thomas Bray—