



One of the most important parenting tasks is helping children learn to obey. This eBook offers practical advice for parents in the throes of obedience training and is high on my recommended reading list.

~ Gary Ezzo

Live in Harmony with First-Time Obedience

How to use love, authority and consistency to teach your child to obey the first time, every time

MAUREEN MONFORE

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For more information and advice, please visit <http://www.ChildwiseChat.com>. Feel free to post any questions you may have or email me at maureen@childwisechat.com.

Thank you and enjoy!

Chapter 4: Training Your Child in First-Time Obedience

First-time obedience is a fairly simple concept to understand and recognize. It means that the child obeys the first time, every time. Training a child in first-time obedience is no easy feat. But take heart, when you break it down into specific actions that are required of you and your child, it becomes a much less daunting task.

Yes, when we train a child in first-time obedience, our primary goal is that they will obey us the first time we give an instruction, no questions asked. But this is too broad a definition to work with. Understand that first-time obedience involves calling your child's name and having him give you eye contact while replying with "yes, mommy." He must maintain eye contact while you give an instruction.

It looks like this:

- Parent: "Ethan?"
- Ethan: "Yes, mommy?" He says this while looking you in the eye.
- Parent: "Ethan, I need you to put your toys away now."
- Ethan: "Yes, mommy!" as he goes to clean up.

That's it. If the child stops what he's doing, verbally acknowledges your call, and gives you eye contact, you have first-time obedience. Later, we'll get into whether to have the child come to you when you call.

With this in mind, here I will explain the specific action items to follow when training a child in first-time obedience. They are as follows:

- Action item #1: Explain that you will expect first-time obedience
- Action item #2: Keep the child near you
- Action item #3: Call your child's name
- Action item #4: Require eye contact
- Action item #5: Require "yes, mommy"
- Action item #6: Have the child come to you (or not)

Action item #1: Explain that you will expect first-time obedience

Before doing anything to begin first-time obedience training, explain to the child that this is your new standard and that you will spend the coming days and weeks training him. Explain to him exactly what first-time obedience means, and show him what it looks like. Role-play with your spouse to show him exactly how it works.

“Moral truth is best communicated in periods of non-conflict. That doesn’t mean we will not teach at times of correction, but it does mean a healthy dose of moral enlightenment should take place throughout the day and in moments of non-conflict, when the child is not in a position to have to defend his or her actions,” (*Growing Kids God’s Way*, p. 22).

If you only teach a child in the process of correcting him, he is less likely to learn the lesson. When he knows he has done something wrong, he wants to receive the correction and move on as quickly as possible. By contrast, when you sit down with your child at a time of non-conflict, he welcomes the conversation and is much more likely to receive and remember your lesson.

If we have never taken the time to teach our children what we expect of them, how can we expect them to comply?

It can be very easy to fall into the trap of expecting our children to understand the rules of life even if we’ve never taught them. If we have never taken the time to teach our children what we expect of them, how can we expect them to comply?

For example, we may simply expect that our children know what good table manners look like. We eat together at the table three times a day every day. We model good manners for them. But have we ever sat down and explained what “good manners” really means? Have we taught them the mechanics of where your fork goes when you’re not using it, to use a napkin rather than your shirt, to not blow bubbles in your milk, etc.? Then

when they display poor manners, we discipline and expect them to get the message through the discipline alone.

Keep this in mind with first-time obedience training. Take the time to teach your child what you expect before you get too deep into the training process.

Action item #2: Keep the child near you

An important step in training a child in first-time obedience is to keep her near you. This is especially important when your child is little and hasn't yet learned to obey. If you're doing dishes or preparing a meal, have the child play in the kitchen or the very next room. When folding laundry, have her sit right with you and even have her help. If you are reading, have her read on a blanket right next to you.

Don't let the child roam the house at will. Not only is this a freedom a young child shouldn't have earned (remember the funnel), but also it will make your obedience training much more difficult. If the child is roaming the house, you don't have the constant visibility over her actions that will prevent misbehavior in the first place.

Imagine that the child is in another room of the house, upstairs even, while you're downstairs. You probably have no idea what she's doing or whether she will hear when you call her name. If she does hear you, she's much less likely to immediately stop

Appendix Three: Evaluate Your First-Time Obedience

Every so often, take the time to evaluate your child's first-time obedience. Print one form for every week of your evaluation. With tally marks, note the number of times you call your child's name and he response with eye contact, a verbal response ("yes, mommy") and an appropriate attitude. At the end of each week, calculate your child's percentage level of first-time obedience in each area and for FTO as a whole.

	Called Name	Eye Contact	Verbal Response	Attitude
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				
Weekly Score				

Weekly FTO Average:

Calculation Example:

Called Child's Name: 20 times

Received Eye Contact: 10 times. Score: 50% ($10 \div 20 = .5 \times 100 = 50\%$)

Received Verbal Response: 5 times. Score: 25% ($5 \div 20 = .25 \times 100 = 25\%$)

Received Appropriate Attitude: 15 times. Score: 75% ($15 \div 20 = .75 \times 100 = 75\%$)

Weekly FTO Average: 50% ($50\% + 25\% + 75\% = 150 \div 3 = 50\%$)



In *Live in Harmony with First-Time Obedience* you'll learn how to:

- Rid your home of tantrums, whining, complaining and negotiating
- Train your child to be respectful and obedient
- Create peace and harmony in your home so you can enjoy your child again
- Work on obedience while he's young and the stakes are low
- Reduce the stress that comes with parenting a young child
- Achieve a balanced life of love and learning with your child

MAUREEN MONFORE is a mother of two young boys, a freelance writer, and the author of the parenting blog ChildwiseChat.com. A loyal follower of the teachings of Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo, she is passionate about teaching children to obey to pave the way for fun, love, learning and essential moral development.

Live in Harmony with First-Time Obedience? Yes, it is possible. Maureen, a mom whose children are demonstrating first-time obedience as part of their character, provides helpful guidance. This is a must-read for any parent working to implement first-time obedience, creating a safe environment for the child and harmony within the home. As long-time followers of her blog, we certainly recommend this book both as a complement to the On Becoming series and encouragement for parents desiring to bring a sense of harmony to the lives of their children.

~ Gary & Anne Marie Ezzo

Maureen is a loyal and passionate follower of the parenting advice offered by Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo. *Live in Harmony with First-Time Obedience* offers a step-by-step application to achieving FTO. It highlights the love and encouragement aspects of teaching obedience while helping parents achieve this goal. This eBook serves as a wonderful complement to the Parent Wise books and is a great addition to your personal library.

~ Valerie Plowman, mother of three and author of BabywiseMom.com

As a working mom, my time is crucial, but obedience is still of utmost important to me. *Live in Harmony with First-Time Obedience* explains all the necessary prep work for teaching first-time obedience and breaks it down into manageable pieces. I find the comments on special circumstances particularly helpful as my daughter has sensory processing disorder. I highly recommend this eBook to any parent, especially to those with limited time.

~ Bethany Lynch, working mother of two and the author of the working mom blog, TheGracefulMom.com

