

CHILD NEAR STOVE

Your two year old child is playing next to a hot stove. You have warned him (her) not to touch the oven because she may burn him (her) self, but she continues to play near the oven.

The responses here show the “dilemma” that different individuals address in different ways. Let us assume that all the parents love and care about the child. Then the question becomes when to intervene and protect, explain, teach (and at what level of assertiveness) and when to allow the child to learn from experience. Issues to be addressed include the age of the child, their “understanding of the situation”, and the potential severity and danger of the consequences.

EXAMPLES:

EXAMPLE ONE: a 60 year old male, response one: I would allow the child to continue to play there (80%); which he saw as appropriately yielding; (we agree, IF the child is not in danger, otherwise, we’d call it negative yielding); response two: would repeat the warning (20%) which he saw as appropriately assertive. His comment: very difficult to allow child to learn by experience, even though painful to both child and myself. (JS comment: I’m not clear if he’s saying it’s difficult (painful) but necessary, which I think might be q3 (depending on how bad the burn would be) – it is an active decision to have the child harm herself in order to learn from experience. Q4 might be more like, I felt helpless and couldn’t figure out how to make her stop, so I just let her continue to play.

EXAMPLE 2 female, 31, Response one: give another lecture to the child (90%) (Appropriately assertive); Response two: let him burn himself (10%) she says appropriately yielding; JS comment: As above, I see this as more q3 than q4 because it sounds intentional, active, and conscious – not a helpless giving up (I didn’t know what to do), but rather a proactive choice to allow harm to the child to teach a lesson.

EXAMPLE 3 female 20, so how would I know? (I have no kids) response one: I would entice the child to play in another area –e.g. a reward to watch tv. (DS: she called this appropriately yielding but isn’t it assertive, because she changes the environment. JS: Yes, I think this is a q1 strategy

RESPONSE MODE CATEGORIES

POSITIVE ASSERTIVE: from more “yin” to more yang”

diverting attention

Continue warning: do not play near the stove

I would create a barrier around the stove

I would remove the child physically; (because too dangerous and I can't supervise her)
Offer explanation

Demonstrate hotness of stove and explain seriousness of burns ; Create a structured situation in which child could experience, heat, burn (JS comment: Presumably in a way that would convey the sensation of hotness without harming the child)

Grabbing hand JS comment: If this is grabbing her hand away because she is in imminent danger, then I'd call this q1

Find a person to supervise the child if I weren't able to give sufficient attention.

NATURE OF WARNING:

Calm, gentle

Explain why

Say how sad I'd be if s/he gets burned

firm voice

stern voice

SHIFTING TO NEGATIVE ASSERTIVE

Yell (JS comment: yelling seems more q3; As opposed to firm, which I see as q1?)

scold

I would slap her hand and explain why JS comment: Slapping I would definitely code as q3

Swat on the rear JS: again, I see any form of corporeal punishment as q3

Apply aversive discipline: spank

Panic, become angry, tense , pull child away and scold.

I would allow the child to get burned; Let child learn the hard way. JS comment: , if this is a conscious choice to teach, then I see it as q3, not q4; "let the child get burned." This tended to be viewed by respondent as q4, which I could see. But in my mind, it was an active, conscious choice to allow the child to pursue a dangerous behavior with the intent to "teach." I saw this as closer to q3 than q4.

YIELDING (which appropriate (if any?), which negative yielding)

Express concern: I'd be sad if you get hurt.

Observe and monitor , comfort if burned.

Watch child, but let child be

Leave child alone.

Combination: Continue to warn, but let child continue to explore JS comment: Warning is q1. Letting her explore seems q2 unless child is likely to be harmed, in which it seems either q3 or q4 (see discussion of teaching above)

COMMENTS ON WISDOM: , Clearly the safety of the child is paramount. Depending on the proximity and immediacy of danger, a more "yang" active, assertive response is warranted. If there is more "time", this could become a teaching situation both for the respondent and the child: "a" wise course might be, calming self (xujing), sharing a warning

again. Maybe putting the child's hand a few inches from burner, and saying "hot" and pulling back. Maybe even going to a sink, and with lukewarm water modeling "hot." And sharing concern and love as context.