

## Supporting a Child's Choice to Go to School

Submitted by David Deutsch on 5 August, 2005 - 14:52

Posted by David Deutsch on the [TCS List](#) on Mon, 28 Apr 1997 23:50:35 +0000 and Thu, 1 May 1997 16:11:18 +0000

 Taking Children Seriously

A poster wrote:

*As you know, my son would like to try the neighborhood kindergarten. But he's not even allowed to get up and go use the phone if he needs to! I am really uncomfortable with that. He may decide at 8:30 that he'd like to call me, but be forced to wait until noon. How horrible!*

Possible solution 1: tell the kindergarten organisers that your son is to be allowed to phone you whenever he likes. This is a condition of his attending.

Possible solution 2: mobile phone (or pager).

Possible solution 3: phone him one or more times during the morning (during each call he decides, among other things, how long it should be until the next call).

Another poster wrote wrote:

*Surely if the nursery school is such that it forbids children from making a phone call, it would be coercive in other ways too? It sounds to me as if not being able to make a phone call would be the least of it. The phrase "not EVEN" indicates that there's more to it than the phone calls.*

Well, yes, but the situation the other poster described was that the child *wants* to try the kindergarten. Presumably he has been given the best available information about what the regime is like. So this question is all about what happens if he changes his mind while he is there.

I think that this issue (of being allowed to leave / make contact with parents) is a pivotal one, actually much more important than how coercive the regime itself is. For if the child has the right to complain to a guaranteed-sympathetic adult about a grievance and/or leave *at zero notice* whenever he likes, there is an absolute upper bound to how much harm the experience can do him. And conversely, if he does not have those rights (or, what amounts to the same thing, if he does not have complete confidence that he has those rights), then even what appear to be only slightly coercive aspects of the regime can easily amount to torture.

to post comments

## Comments

### **Somehow I would not like the**

Submitted by [Kahuki \(not verified\)](http://www.kahuki.com) (<http://www.kahuki.com>) on 4 June, 2007 - 10:07

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Somehow I would not like the idea to have my child a mobile phone at this age.

to post comments

### **Possible solution 4:**

Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 29 July, 2007 - 10:11

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Possible solution 4: Introduce the child to what will surely be the horrifying, traumatizing notion that in the larger world outside the family there are such things as rules, and that they count for *everybody* -- even him. That the planet is not going to halt in its orbit to negotiate a "common preference" every time he objects to its actions.

to post comments

### **Why is that?**

Submitted by [MikeAustin \(not verified\)](http://www.limotycoon.com/US-limousine-services-directory/) (<http://www.limotycoon.com/US-limousine-services-directory/>) on 7 January, 2008 - 13:11

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I see everyone is looking for a solution instead of wondering what is the reason for that. Why are not allowed?  
And number 5: Find another kindergarten :)

to post comments

### **Go with him for a few days**

Submitted by Willow on 31 January, 2008 - 10:03

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I like the idea of negotiating phone home rights with the kindergarten.

How about going with him for a few days so you can see how they work and how he gets on.

We're going to join the waiting list for local nursery school (UK kindergarten) in the summer, with a view to dropping out if it doesn't suit.

to post comments

## **You could go the route of**

*Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 26 June, 2012 - 12:55*

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You could go the route of explaining to them that they must obey the rules of the kindergarten if they want to go, and let them decide, letting a child make a choice and deal with the responsibility of that choice builds maturity.

to post comments

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