



## TCS Posting Guidelines

Submitted by Sarah Fitz-Claridge on 26 August, 2003 - 17:37

**Please be sure to read this before you post.**

 Taking Children Seriously

### Introduction

The Taking Children Seriously web site, the TCS List, and the TCS Discussion Board are for the discussion of TCS theory and practice, and for the support of TCS parents. As such, it will not appeal to all. TCS is a philosophical theory having moral implications, including implications about what sort of discussions there should be on the TCS forums. In order to maintain an atmosphere conducive to the growth of knowledge of real TCS families in their real lives, TCS discussion forums are lightly moderated.

The TCS forums are unusual in a number of ways. Most notably, criticism is welcome (as long as it is friendly), but **meta-discussion** (<http://www.fitz-claridge.com/node/18>) (discussion whose subject matter is, say, how to hold discussions instead of how to treat children) is unwelcome. Moreover, discussion on TCS forums should be general and hypothetical, not discuss or mention children's lives in ways that could embarrass them later, when they are the President of the United States, say. Indeed, please do not violate *anyone's* privacy.

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### The Specific Rules

- Do not post **meta-comments/discussion** (<http://www.fitz-claridge.com/node/18>). (Send complaints, comments and suggestions about the management of the TCS List, website or the TCS Discussion Board to me, **Sarah Fitz-Claridge** (<http://www.fitz-claridge.com/>), privately at [founder@takingchildrenseriously.com](mailto:founder@takingchildrenseriously.com).)
- The TCS website and Discussion Board are public forums but the TCS List is **private**. People choose to use the TCS List rather than the public forums because they do not feel comfortable writing on a public forum. Do not show/send TCS List posts to others under any circumstances. Do not quote posts from the TCS List anywhere else.
- Do not post specific details of children's (or others') lives, even with their consent. Indeed, please don't post specific details about your own life either. Write hypothetical, general posts rather than getting into personal details.
- Do not post destructively damning judgements of children's (or others') internal states, motives, or character.
- Do not solicit personal information either.
- Keep all the TCS forums friendly and supportive. Posts appearing to be hostile will be deleted. Please take the trouble to word your criticisms in a way that won't destroy the person. Don't just be a fallibilist, be seen to be one. You might just be wrong in your damning judgements.
- Please do feel free to post, but please take care not to swamp the TCS List, website or Discussion Board with posts such that you seem to be dominating the discussions. Please try to avoid posting significantly more than anyone else at any given time.
- In general, threads (including discussions on the same subject with a different Subject: line) should be short. They should not be repetitive and they should not go round in circles. Insistently repetitive threads drown out other more subtle threads so please ensure that your reply is making a point which others would recognise as new to the thread

rather than merely repeating a point which has already been made. If a thread is getting nowhere, instead of replying line-by-line to another post, write a self-contained post which does not cite previous posts in the thread, and give it an appropriate Subject: line.

- Please do not cross-post.
- Ensure that the subject of your messages is reflected in the Subject: line of your posts. Change the Subject: line if necessary.
- No off-topic messages.
- Please don't post 'fluff' posts and/or very short posts without much content.
- Send personal messages to the individual poster. Do not post them on the TCS forums.
- Please do not quote more than is necessary for context. (Quoting too little can also be a problem!)
- Please write in standard English including, for example, capital letters at the beginning of a sentence.

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## Answers to frequently-asked questions about the TCS Posting Guidelines

### 1. What is meta-discussion?

See [this article \(http://www.fitz-claridge.com/node/18\)](http://www.fitz-claridge.com/node/18).

### 2. If I can't mention specific details of my children's lives, how can I seek help?

#### Use hypothetical forms of words

Instead of saying: "My child..." or "A child I know..." or "In one family...", use hypothetical forms of words, such as "Suppose a child..." or "If a child were to... then should a parent...?"

For example, please do not write: "We went to Toys 'R' Us yesterday, and Ralph wanted us to buy a Game Cube, a \$400 computerised robot, a \$129 set of Lego, and countless other items. We have a very limited income and we just can't afford that. What would you do in that sort of situation?"

Instead, write something like: "If a child were to ask his parents to buy a larger proportion of the merchandise in the Toy Mega Store than they could afford without taking out a second mortgage, then how might a TCS parent solve that problem?"

#### Keep Posts General

Please don't write: "A child I know likes to pick his nose and ram the contents up his parent's nose, which she finds too disgusting to bear. What can she do non-coercively to discourage this habit (particularly when in the presence of Grandma)? Do you do anything to socialise your children or is that considered un-TCS?"

Instead, write something like: "Young children sometimes have what many adults consider unacceptable habits – such as playing with poo or wiping their noses on the hem of a visitor's dress. How might a TCS parent deal with such situations? Is there any place for showing one's natural disgust, or could that be coercive? How might one avoid a rift with non-family members who find themselves on the receiving end of a young child's bodily fluids? Does the TCS idea of non-coercively guiding children include giving them information about hygiene and how one is expected to behave in polite society?"

Instead of giving a detailed description of the problem, ask a general question instead.

Avoid going into agonisingly specific and potentially privacy-violating detail such as: "Suppose the child wants to follow the mother into the bathroom and cries when she says she wants *even one minute* to herself..."

Instead, ask something like: “Should one consider it possible and desirable for a parent to have moments of real privacy, even from a young child? While in the bathroom? While having sex? While pondering deeply on the plot of her new novel? Surely privacy is valuable, even indispensable, sometimes – and yet, what if a child doesn't want to leave the parent's company, *ever*, and cries at the very idea? Don't very young children take that view sometimes? What approaches might one take to make such a child happy, yet solve the problem of privacy too?”

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### **A Word Of Encouragement**

If you have a question or indeed if you are bursting with questions, do please post your questions. It doesn't matter if your questions are ‘basic’ or ‘ill-informed’. Just mention the fact that you are new to TCS, and ask away. The more questions we get, the more likely each of those issues will be addressed.

If you are new to TCS and worried that your post might not meet the posting guidelines, feel free to send it to [tcsmoderator@takingchildrenseriously.com](mailto:tcsmoderator@takingchildrenseriously.com) and we will be happy to look it over and edit it for you and either send it back to you or post it for you if you prefer. Do say where you want it posted (the private TCS List or the public TCS Discussion Board).

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## More articles

- [Enacting a Theory](#)
- [The Dark Side of John Holt](#)
- [Help! Child Hates Eyepatch!](#)
- [Coercion — the Meaning of the Word](#)
- [How Would You Like It?](#)
- [Taking A Wrong Turn](#)
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