

**Getting over the finish line in a race requires discipline and lots of practice. You may decide to consult a coach to help you with a plan of action that will get you over that finish line.**

The same applies with changing your language with children. It requires a lot of practice, and sometimes you need to consult a coach to get the child over the finish line and help them find their Big Voice!

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**Children's Big Voice is the assertive voice that children use to teach others how to treat them.**

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I have the privilege of coaching in Early Childhood classrooms around 20 hours each month. I hear lots of conversations between children, and I hear lots of tattling.

Let me be honest right here: I was once that mom that hated “tattling.” I would say, “If it isn’t serious, don’t come to me. There will be trouble if you involve me.”

Well here’s the truth of the matter: I didn’t know how to handle their tattling. If I didn’t know how to handle it, how could I teach children what to do? Now, I’ve learned a better way, and you can too.

So, are you ready to get children over the finish line when tattling is involved? It’s going to take some practice and it’s going to take changing your mindset.

Get on your mark, get set, go!

## **THE SKILL OF ASSERTIVENESS**

The Conscious Discipline Skill of Assertiveness helps children find their Big Voice. Here’s what’s important! The adult *must* have an assertive voice to teach the assertive voice to children. You can’t teach what you don’t know.

I had a passive voice when I was raising my children, and I had to practice and practice to find my assertive voice, that voice of no doubt. After lots of practice, I finally found my “voice of knowing.”



Here's what the assertive voice does:

1. Tells the child what to do
2. Sends the nonverbal message of "just do it" with tone of voice and body language
3. Paints a clear and direct picture with the intent of helping the child be successful. Remember that young children think in pictures. They have immature inner speech.

## **FINDING YOUR ASSERTIVE VOICE**

So, how do you acquire an assertive voice? The assertive voice is the voice of no doubt. It requires the same tone you would use to say, "The ceiling is above us."

Mastering the assertive voice takes a lot of practice. One helpful trick is to recite these lines in your head before stating what you want a child to do: *The sky is blue. The grass is green.* You will state what you want the child to do in the same tone that you recited these lines in your head.

*The sky is blue. The grass is green.* "It is time to line up."

## **CHANGING YOUR PERCEPTION ABOUT TATTLING**

Dr. Bailey states that "developmentally, children up to eight years of age are genetically programmed to bring their distress to significant adults for assistance."

Take comfort in the fact that tattling is developmental. Changing your perception is critical in order for your mindset and your response to change. Children are asking for help, not trying to annoy us.

Instead of trying to put a stop to tattling, use it as a teaching opportunity. This helps children see the wisdom in seeking adult assistance in times of need, and this trust can extend into the adolescent and teen years.

So, when a child comes to you with their upset, it's time to make that shift. Take a deep breath.

## COACHING CHILDREN

Conscious Discipline's approach to tattling starts with empowering the child to reflect on the question, "Did you like it?"

When a child comes to you with their upset, it's important to be present with them and listen for their "voice." Is it passive, aggressive or assertive?

Once you've identified the child's "voice," it's time to coach them to find their Big Voice. Let's practice now!

The child comes to you and says, "Sophie took my toy."

You say, "Did you like it?"

The child says, "No!" (Remember to assess the child's voice when they answer.)

You: "Tell Sophie, *I don't like it when you take my toy.*" (If the child's voice sounds passive or aggressive, you may tell them, "Match your voice to mine.")

Child: "Sophie, I don't like it when you take my toy."

And here is where we often don't get the child over the finish line. This is where we mess it up and leave the child with the upset. It's also where we fail to send the other child a message about what *to* do instead.

Instead, let's take the extra steps to get these children over the finish line!

## FINAL STRETCH: GETTING CHILDREN OVER THE FINISH LINE

It's imperative that we coach the child in explaining how they *want* to be treated by their friend. They tend to get stuck in, "I don't want her to take my toy," or, "I don't want him to push me."

Here's your language:

"So, you want your friend to ask for a turn" or, "So, you want your friend to say, *Move over.*"

Here, you can also ask the friend:

"Are you willing to ask for a turn?" or, "Are you willing to say, *Move over?*"



## **IF YOU'VE CREATED YOUR SCHOOL FAMILY, THEY WILL MORE THAN LIKELY ANSWER YES!**

Close the interaction with these words:

“How are you going to show each other that you still care for each other? A hug or a fist bump?”

And there you have it. You did it! You helped a child get over the finish line, find their Big Voice, and reconnect with their School Family.

Can you imagine the powerful consequences from learning to get children over the finish line? This can change families, schools, communities, states, countries, a world.

Are you willing to practice teaching children to use their Big Voice? It takes time, but this practice can truly change our world.