



## Kids as consumers

By Professor Matt Sanders

Copyright © 2014 Triple P International Pty Ltd

These tips columns are provided for use in schools newsletters or other community newsletters.

Conditions of use:

1. These columns may not be edited. Text must appear in full.
2. Credit must be given to the author, Professor Matt Sanders, Triple P – Positive Parenting Program.
3. These are for newsletters only and not for online publication on websites.
4. The columns should be published one at a time and not in groups within the same newsletter.

Thank you!

### Kids as consumers

By Professor Matt Sanders

It could be anything from breakfast cereal at the supermarket to an expensive new video game. Chances are though, your child has a very clear idea of what he or she wants you to buy.

It's hardly surprising when you consider children watching two hours of television a day will be bombarded with around 10,000 advertising messages every year.

So, with children being groomed to consume from a very young age, some parents may feel powerless when the pestering starts. But there are ways to help children express their wants – which is natural and not necessarily negative – yet prepare them for the disappointment of not always getting everything they want.

First, you should help your child understand why you will or won't buy something. Rather than telling your son he can't have something, "because I say so", you could explain why the product isn't suitable. Is it offensive or too expensive? Perhaps the child can have the item when they reach a certain age. Explain once and don't let your child interrogate you.

You can also help your children become better informed consumers by teaching them the value of money. Give them a set amount of pocket money to spend as they like. Even six year olds soon learn they can't buy anything once the piggy bank is empty.

And finally, remember you're a role model. Think about what you say and do in front of your kids. If you constantly discuss other people's worth or success in terms of how much they earn, how much they have or what they've bought, your child is going to accept those values as important.

**Professor Matt Sanders is founder of the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program®. To find out more about Triple P in Alberta go to [www.triplep-parenting.net](http://www.triplep-parenting.net).**