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ParentMagic Inc  
800 Roosevelt Rd  
Glen Ellyn IL 60137

[www.parentmagic.com](http://www.parentmagic.com)

## TWO BIGGEST PARENTING MISTAKES

The two biggest mistakes parents and teachers make in dealing with children are: Too Much Talking and Too Much Emotion. Talking is bad because it either doesn't work or takes you through the Talk-Persuade-Argue-Yell-Hit Syndrome.

Why is too much emotion destructive? When they are little, kids feel inferior because they ARE inferior. Sure, they can be cute and lovable, but they are also smaller, less privileged, less intelligent, less skillful, less responsible and less of just about everything than their parents and the older kids. And this "lessness" bugs them a lot! They don't like it. They do like to feel they are powerful and capable of making some mark on the world.



Have you ever seen a small child go down to a lake and throw rocks in the water? Children can do that for hours, partly because the big splashes are a sign of their impact. They are making things happen.

## YOUR UPSET IS THE "BIG SPLASH"

What does rock tossing have to do with what happens at home? If your small child can get big old you all upset, your upset is the big splash for him. It's not that he has no conscience and is going to grow up to be a criminal. It's just that having all that power temporarily rewards—or feels good to—the inferior part of the child. Parents who say, "It drives me absolutely crazy when she eats her dinner with her fingers. Why does she do that?" may have already answered their own question. She may do that at least partly BECAUSE IT DRIVES YOU CRAZY.

### Key Concept

If you have a child who is doing something you don't like, get real upset about it on a regular basis and, sure enough she'll repeat it for you.



There are certainly other discipline systems other than [1-2-3 Magic](#), but you can ruin any of them by talking too much and getting too excited. These two mistakes, of course, usually go hand in hand, and the emotion is usually anger.

Some parents can turn off the talking and the emotional upset like a faucet, and others have to work like dogs to get the job done. Even then, they often have to remind

themselves over and over that talking and arguing and yelling and screaming don't really help. These tactics merely blow off steam for a few seconds. If parents find that they can't shake these habits, some sort of outpatient counseling or psychotherapy is indicated.

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## STUDIES SHOW 1-2-3 MAGIC WORKS!

Parents are often enormously stressed by their children. And it's painfully obvious that stress from kids can aggravate depression, anxiety, impulse control disorders, marital discord, substance abuse and a host of other psychological problems. Recent studies show that [1-2-3 Magic](#) can not only improve children's cooperation and reduce misbehavior, but it can also improve a parent's mental health.



**BRIEF PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL PARENTING PROGRAM [1-2-3 MAGIC]: AN EVALUATION AND 1-YEAR FOLLOW-UP** Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry: Volume 42 (10) October 2003

### **SUMMARY OF TORONTO HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN STUDY (above)**

"A major and statistically significant improvement in the children's behavior and a large drop in parental stress, depression and hostility."

### **MOOSEHEART CHILD CITY AND SCHOOL STUDY**

"...the program made parenting easier and more flexible, while at the same time it significantly reduced problem behavior in the children."

### **MEDICINE HAT STUDY**

"Over 90% of the parents felt that the 1-2-3 sessions had made a significant difference in their child's behavior."

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