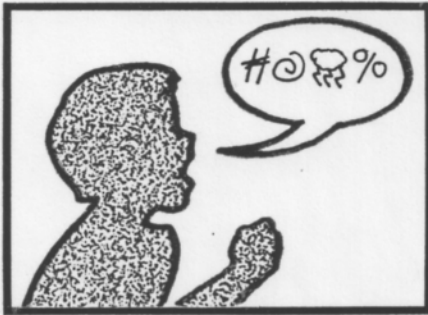


## Grade 5 November Part 1



### Why a child uses foul language—and what parents can do about it

One day, 9-year-old Todd ran in the house and used a four-letter word to his Mom. It was a word his parents had never used in his presence. His Mom was horrified. She sent Todd to his room until his Dad came home.

When Dad arrived, both parents decided together what they would do. They washed out Todd's mouth with soap. But when they had some friends over the next evening, Todd used the same word again, in front of their company. He even appeared proud when he said it.

How can parents successfully discourage children from using unacceptable language?

First of all, harsh treatment won't work. The more severe the punishment, the more the forbidden words seem to fascinate the child.

Even bribery won't work.

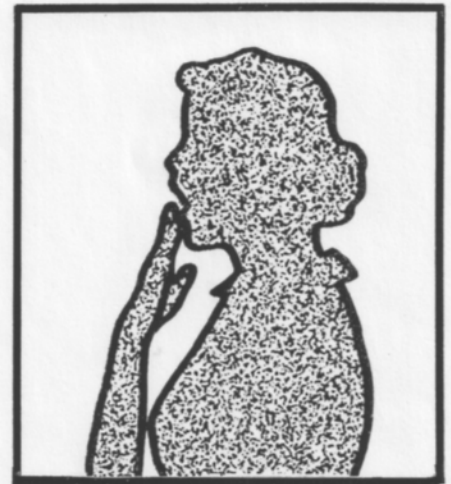
When one set of parents promised to pay their son a dollar at the end of the week if he didn't use a certain word, he promptly told them he knew another word that would be worth at least five dollars!

One of the reasons children use forbidden words is because it makes them feel grown-up and gives them a sense of power. By using these words, children dare and provoke their parents. They particularly enjoy it when a parent loses composure.

Children who are in the pre-adolescent period (ages 8 to 11) are beginning to make adjustments to their heightened sexual awareness. One of the ways by which they seek release of some of that tension and anxiety is by using slang terms for bodily functions, genitals, and sexual behavior.

Whatever the child's reason may be for using "naughty words," there are ways parents can deal with the problem. The most important of these is for the parents to avoid using taboo words in front of their children. The attitude "do as I say but not as I do" will only serve to undermine the child's trust and respect for parents.

Secondly, parents should remain calm even when their child uses the most shocking forbidden words. The best approach is a calm but clear disapproval of the forbidden language. Most importantly, the parent should talk to the child, not about the meaning of the bad words, but about the underlying feelings that are causing this behavior. A gentle but firm attitude on the part of the parent—making it perfectly clear what behaviors are unacceptable—will ultimately prove to be the most successful.



*"The only rational way of educating is to be an example."  
—Albert Einstein*