

DON'T GIVE IN TO CHILDREN'S HIGH DEMANDS

As children prepare to return to school, many parents are busy paying school fees, shopping for necessities and ensuring their children settle well for the new term. However, beyond the excitement of reporting back to school lies an issue that many families silently struggle with – children whose demands keep increasing.

Some ask for excessive pocket money, expensive gadgets, luxurious personal items, fashionable clothes or unnecessary school requirements.

Others pressure parents into lifestyles they cannot sustain, simply because they want to fit in with friends or imitate social media trends.

If not addressed early, such behaviour can produce entitled and irresponsible adults. Parents must, therefore, learn how to manage children's demands wisely.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROOT CAUSE

Children rarely become demanding overnight. In many cases, their behaviour is shaped by the environment around them. Some children are influenced by peer pressure at school, where status is measured by expensive shoes, smartphones, hairstyles, or the amount of money one spends. Others are heavily influenced by social media, celebrities, or the wealthy lifestyles they constantly consume online. Some children simply grow up in homes where every request is immediately fulfilled without boundaries. Over time, they begin to believe that getting everything they want is normal.



PARENTING
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Parents should, therefore, look beyond the behaviour itself and understand the influences behind it. A child demanding too much may actually be struggling with insecurity, identity, competition or a lack of values.

DANGEROUS POCKET MONEY

One of the greatest concerns today is excessive pocket money among school-going children. While parents may think they are helping their children feel comfortable at school, too much money can expose them to dangerous habits. Some students use the money to experiment with alcohol, drugs, smoking, betting, or other harmful substances. Others use it to entertain unhealthy friendships or lifestyles that distract them from education and discipline.

Sadly, many parents only discover these behaviours after serious damage has already occurred. The problem is not merely giving money; it is giving money without accountability,

guidance or monitoring.

Children should understand that pocket money is for essential needs, not for luxury, competition or reckless spending. Parents who give big sums of money simply to avoid appearing 'poor' before other parents or fellow children may unknowingly be financing destructive behaviour.

AVOID PARENTING THROUGH GUILT

Some parents over-provide because they feel guilty. Busy parents may compensate for their absence by giving children excessive money or expensive gifts. Separated parents may also compete for children's affection through material things. Others fear that denying children luxuries will make them feel unloved.

However, love is not measured by the money a parent gives. In fact, children who receive everything without limits often struggle with gratitude, patience, resilience and responsibility later in life. Responsible parenting sometimes requires saying "no" even when you can afford to say "yes."

NEEDS VERSUS WANTS

Many children today do not understand the difference between needs and wants. A child may need school shoes, but not necessarily the most expensive pair. A student may need transport money, but not daily amounts meant for luxury consumption.

Many children today struggle because they have never been taught financial discipline. They grow up believing that comfort is a right rather than a privilege earned through

responsibility and hard work.

Parents should intentionally involve children in conversations about budgeting, priorities and financial realities. Let children understand that money is earned through effort and should be used wisely. This helps them develop appreciation, instead of entitlement.

SET BOUNDARIES WITHOUT FEAR

Some parents fear that setting limits will make children unhappy. Yet children actually thrive where healthy boundaries exist. A home without limits eventually creates confusion and indiscipline.

If a child is given a specific amount of pocket money, parents should explain why it is enough, instead of constantly giving in to pressure, which trains them to manipulate situations emotionally. Boundaries should be firm, but loving. Though children may complain, many later appreciate the discipline they received.

DO NOT COMPETE WITH OTHER PARENTS

Some parents feel pressured to provide certain lifestyles simply because other families are doing so. Unfortunately, this creates unnecessary financial stress and unhealthy parenting decisions.

Every family has different priorities, and financial abilities. Parents must refuse to raise children around competition and appearance. A child should never grow up believing that their worth is determined by brands, luxury, or outward display. Children who grow up understanding contentment and simplicity are often

emotionally healthier and more focused than those raised in constant comparison. Such children may deter corruption in adulthood.

SUDDEN BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

Parents must remain observant, especially during school terms. Sudden increases in money requests, secrecy, aggressive behaviour, isolation, declining academic performance, or unexplained expenses may signal deeper problems.

Sometimes, children demanding too much are already involved in harmful peer groups or dangerous habits. Parents should maintain regular communication with teachers, school administrators and even trusted guardians to monitor children's behaviour. The goal is not to spy on children, but to remain responsibly involved in their lives.

TEACH GRATITUDE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Children who appreciate small things rarely become excessively demanding. Parents should intentionally teach gratitude from an early age. Let children participate in household responsibilities, understand sacrifice and appreciate effort.

A child who has never experienced responsibility may easily misuse privilege. However, children who are taught discipline, accountability, and service often develop maturity and self-control.

The writer is a parenting coach and marriage counsellor. For a detailed article, visit www.newvision.co.ug