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# Cussing Kids and Out-to-Lunch Parents

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Language changes with time, and words both appear and disappear in their season. Yet, in every age, certain words function as profane language, curse words, intended for maximum offense and shock value. These days, it's getting harder and harder to shock, as curse words fall into general use — even among the young.

Marlon Manuel of *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reports that kids are becoming first-rate artists with curse words, even as their parents accept cursing as normal.

*The daily lexicon, whether on television, stored in kids' iPods or packed in your soccer carpool, brims with borderline expletives — words some parents find inoffensive and permissible, though others deem crass, rude and unacceptable.* Manual suggests that many very young children have adopted what he calls 'Cussing Lite' — a list of words that are clearly offensive, but will not get you sent home from school. Many parents seem to see this trend as an acceptable compromise.

"Vulgarity — like other things labeled out of bounds — has long held a coolness factor for kids and cultures. But when the real word is too much, the watered-down one still carries enough panache for the tween and under-10 set," he reports. Meanwhile, another controversy over language is forming in Scotland, where the Scottish Parent Teacher Council has argued that educators often "overreact" to the use of profanity by school-age children. A school in England announced recently that it would allow children to curse up to five times per lesson without sanction — even using the worst vulgarities imaginable.

Consider this section from a report in *The Scotsman*, in which parents' group spokesperson Eleanor Coner affirms this approach:

*"I don't think we should go round swearing all the time," she said. "But in particular the 'F word' has become such a common thing in language that, yes, people should be made to think about it. But if you overreact you are less likely to be effective in stopping it.*

*"The school in England is using this method for 15 and 16-year-olds. If we want them to behave like adults we have to treat them like adults.*

*"This is similar to having a swear box in the office. It will make them think about their language without being an overreaction."*

The lunacy of this approach should be evident to all. Is the teacher to keep a list of children and their curse words of the day by frequency? Why is five the limit? What comes next, five passes on cheating, lying, hitting, and playing hooky? Remember when parents expected the schools to require children to behave, to learn, and to obey? Well, those days are long gone. It's enough to make you want to curse — but don't.

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