

Dad's Viral Post Sticks It to the Parent Haters

As a parent, one of my pet peeves is the parent haters.

These are the people who would prefer that children never be seen nor heard in public, and they'll jump at any chance they get to let parents know how much they're inconveniencing them.

They are quick on the trigger to chide parents the nanosecond their child stands up in a shopping cart, to roll their eyes when a toddler lets out a cry on a plane or in a restaurant, to huff and puff until a mom takes the not-so-subtle hint to move her six-year-old out of their way at a grocery store. They tend to assume that every time a child acts up it must be because the parents are clueless softies who never use discipline.

On March 4, daddy blogger Clint Edwards of Oregon fired back against all the parent haters. When his toddler threw a fit at a family outing to Red Robin, he had to drag her past numerous patrons who gave him disapproving looks. His [reasoned Facebook response](#) to them went viral, having garnered over 160K shares.

Here is the post:

I'm stuck in the van with my toddler. We went out to dinner as a family, and she had a meltdown because mom wouldn't let her throw chicken strips. So she screamed, and screamed, and kicked and kicked, and since I was the only one finished with my meal, I had the pleasure of dragging her out of Red Robin.

I carried her [passed] the bar and everyone stared at me, most of them childless, I assumed. No one with children would give me that straight faced, lip twisted, look that seems to say, "if you can't control your kid, then don't go out."

Well... no. I can't control her.

Not all the time.

Not yet.

She's two and it's going to take years to teach her how to act appropriately in public, and the only way I am ever going to teach that is to take her out and show her what's right and wrong. By saying no a million times, letting her throw a fit, and telling her no again.

These lessons take patience, hard work, and real world experiences, and I'm sorry to those at the bar who got irritated by my child's fit, but you are part of this practice. Your parents did the same with you, and that's how you now know how to recognize when a child does something irritating in a restaurant. It's how you learned to look at a situation and say, "That parent needs to control their kids."

It's how you learned to be a respectable person.

I get it. Kids are irritating when they are loud in a restaurant. I know. I'm living it. But before you get angry and judgmental, realize that what you are witnessing is not bad parenting, but rather, parents working hard to fix the situation.

You are looking at what it takes to turn a child into a person.

Like this dad, I believe parents should do their utmost to teach their kids how to behave in public. The thought of my children inconveniencing others causes me considerable anxiety, and that's not necessarily a bad thing.

But children have free will, and consistent discipline doesn't always produce the desired results. And even if it does work, it doesn't always happen within a brief time frame.

How is it that many people today don't get this?

One reason I can think of is that, in our current society, most of us simply don't grow up around significantly younger children. Two children per family has been the [average](#) in America for some time now, and [the average age gap](#) between these two children is two and a half years. That means that you're not going to have many 12-year-olds, for instance, who have the opportunity to watch and learn from the trials of their parents dealing with, say, a 3-year-old sibling.

In addition, most American children are siloed by age group in school at a very early age. From the time they're in preschool up until high school or college, they spend most of their time with those who have a birthday within 12 months of their own. These aren't the days of the one-room schoolhouses, where the older children were expected to help in the teaching of the younger children.

If I hadn't had my own children, I suspect I wouldn't have had much sympathy for parents. My two brothers (twins) are only a year younger than me, and we spent the entirety of our childhood around our peers. In fact, I don't think I ever held a baby until I held my firstborn.

So even though the parent haters now get on my nerves, I understand. But it's still unfortunate.