

# Kids and Hygiene: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly [Video Transcript]

*Voiceover: Welcome to Connected Families' Discipline that Connects videocast series. For more information, you can visit us at [ConnectedFamilies.org](http://ConnectedFamilies.org).*

Chad Hayenga: Hi, I'm Chad Hayenga, and I'm here with Lynne Jackson, co-founder of Connected Families. Today we're going to talk about hygiene. Yes, hygiene! You heard me right. Should I care about how my child goes out looking in public? Sounds like you had experience with this in a recent coaching session. Can you say a little bit more about that?

Lynne Jackson: Yeah, we'll call her "Sarah", and she came in several coaching sessions in a row just in tears quite a bit of the session over the intense power struggles she was having with her kids. One of those struggles was just getting the kids out the door in a presentable manner in the mornings. Washing your face, combing your hair, brushing your teeth -- it was just wearing them down, causing conflict before the kids even left for school. So we talked about who really owns that issue, whose problem is that?

Chad: Well, one of the things I wonder about, because sometimes it's an all-or-nothing thing from a parenting perspective, where you feel like I'm going to -- this child's either going to go out the door looking like I want them to, or else "whatever, who cares" kind of thing. What do you do? I mean, just stop caring about what they look like?

Lynne: Well that was causing some anxiety for Sarah, too, even thinking about that. But we talked about how she could guide her children into thinking about their values in a situation -- thinking about how they form conclusions about people, just based on their appearance and how they act, and how the kids wanted others to think about them at school. They sort of talked about that, evaluated that, and then she was able to say, "It is your responsibility to care about how you look at school. Whether or not that's important to you is not important to me -- it's your thing to decide. If you care about that, cool. If you don't care about that, cool. I'm gonna love you no matter what."

Chad: So really trying to help walk through the thinking for their child, not telling them what to think but even how to think, how they want to be perceived, what does that look like for them, taking ownership for themselves.

Lynne: Right.

Chad: So how did it go? What happened?

Lynne: Well, they talked about it and they realized that their appearance was totally their responsibility but tooth-brushing affected the family. That was a family problem. So tooth-brushing had to be done well. Everything else was up for grabs. So she talked that over with them and they came up with a plan.

Chad: That's an interesting distinction. So if you go out with a milk mustache, that's your problem, that doesn't affect me at all. But if you're having cavities because you're not brushing your teeth, then that impacts all of us and I may need to do something to intervene. Is that accurate?

Lynne: Yeah. So they problem-solved it and figured out how they were going to be really faithful about the tooth-brushing, and the rest they could do whatever they wanted.

Chad: So what difference did it make?

Lynne: Well, they were able to get out the door peacefully, in a connected way. And on a number of occasions she said, "You know, I love you, rooster tails and all!"

Chad: Wow!

Lynne: So there were some really important messages she was communicating to her kids in that. Number one, "You're safe with me." I'm not gonna try to manipulate and control you to make me feel better. Number two, "You're loved no matter what!" Milk mustache, rooster tails and all. "You are capable of making choices yourself." Evaluating what's important to you. And "You're responsible for your own behavior." So their mornings were more peaceful. Her third session she was smiling instead of crying. That was a nice end result.

Chad: Amazing. So whether it's hygiene or the unique combinations of clothes that your child has picked out, whatever it might be, set them up for success. Allow them to take ownership of the things that they can have control over and let us know how it goes. Tell us your stories. Thanks for joining us today.