

We've Got To Get Away... We've Got To Run Away!

This post is titled after a line from my favorite movie, [The Wizard of Oz](#). In case you live in a hole or you're Amish, the movie is about a girl named Dorothy who runs away and gets swept into a mystical land. Of course, if you're Amish, I don't know why you're reading my blog, but I'm glad you are. But the reason I'm writing this is that it's happened – we've had our first threat of running away from a kid. For those of you who know our family, you get only one guess as to who it was. Got your guess? Ok, it was Samantha – SURPRISE! It's funny because my husband and I were just discussing this a few days ago. We talked about how seemingly every little kid plans to run away at one time or another. We also talked about how if any of our kids were going to run away, we both thought it would be Samantha (she's 4, by the way, if you don't know us, and she's *always* been a firecracker, even as far back as her womb-dwelling days). And now here we are, mere days later, and she brings it up. She didn't attempt it or say it out of anger; what happened is this: She was bouncing on our bouncing zebra toy, which actually belongs to her little sister, Disney. Since Disney is almost 2, seeing Samantha on the bouncing zebra made her suddenly decide that she wanted to play on it, of course. So I asked Sammie to give Disney a turn, and she refused. I started threatening things like making her take a nap, time-out, and taking toys away, and for each punishment, she had an answer.

"I'm going to have to make you take a nap then." was met with "I won't sleep."

"Then I'll have to take away one of your toys." was followed by "Then I'll run away."

Well, the situation was resolved when Disney asked for a

popsicle. I was more than happy to give her one because she is being SO good today; polar opposite of the hellish day she made for me yesterday. The new popsicles I bought today weren't frozen yet, and all we had was some random soccer ball popsicle I found in the freezer. I gave it to her, totally over-emphasizing what a good girl she's been today so hopefully she'll get the message and stay this way. But I gave it to her knowing we might have a problem when I didn't have any for the other kids, which is a golden rule of parenting that must not be broken: if you have 2 kids, obtain things and give them out in twos. If you have 3 kids, you must always have 3 treats, toys, what have you. Whatever it is, there always has to be one per kid – I call this the 'separate but equal law of parenting'. So today I broke the separate but equal law, and guess what I got in return? A tantrum, of course. I explained to Sammie that Disney got the popsicle because she was being good, and that Sammie was not being good. She said, "But I'm being good now!" And I agreed, but I also explained that I had said she would be punished for not doing as I said by sharing with her sister and so this was her punishment. She threw a tantrum, but got over it rather quickly. I think she might have actually learned a lesson.

But back to the running away. I think every kid tries it or at least thinks about it. But of course, since they're kids, the plans are never very well thought out. Like everyone, I tried it to, and my plan was packing a can of spaghetti in a suitcase. I was thinking ahead about being hungry, but of course I hadn't planned where I would be going or even how I was going to open that can of spaghetti. I don't even remember what prompted my decision to run away, which says something about how insignificant my parents' wronging me really was. One time when my sister wanted to run away, she went so far as to call our aunt to come pick her up – luckily my aunt called my mom to double-check, but at least my sister had a plan. Most kids who think about running away don't have

a good solid plan, and many of them realize this before they actually leave the house. Let's hope we are lucky enough to have that happen with Samantha if she decides to follow through on her threat.