



Consistent, effective
discipline can reduce
power struggles.

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Discipline

Who's in charge here?

Do you ever wonder who's really in charge in your home? Many parents occasionally do. As children grow up, they try to test limits. It's a natural, normal part of child development, but it can be very frustrating for parents and most often leads to power struggles.

There are two key points for parents to learn in order to minimize power struggles with their children:

- Consistent, effective discipline can reduce power struggles.
- Recognizing power struggles when they happen and having tools and tricks ready to stop them.

What parents can do

- Power struggles start when children begin testing their limits and find their boundaries are unclear. Be clear and consistent about the kind of behavior you're trying to foster in your child.
- When your child wants to argue with you, don't engage in it. Clearly state your expectation and the consequences, then follow through.
- When you recognize you are engaged in a power struggle with your child, just stop. Change your behavior and break it up.
- Give your child choices that you can live with. When your child has a few options to choose from, the child will feel that he or she has more control.
- Teach your child the importance of listening and considering each person's point of view by focusing on solutions. Power struggles create a win-lose situation. Show your child how to look for solutions that work for everyone.
- Ignore negative behavior whenever possible and acknowledge and encourage good behavior. When your child has behaved well, tell him or her that is the kind of behavior you expect.
- Distract or redirect your child's attention when they are doing something you don't like.
- Be a role model for your child. The goal of discipline is not to punish. Teach your child to behave appropriately by setting a good example.