



# POWER STRUGGLES

Parenting Tips & Tricks

Children's need for independence changes across their developmental stages. As parents, it's our job to help them become independent in safe ways and with good boundaries. It's not easy! It's also good to know this need for independence comes from their brains... they aren't just being difficult or testing your limits. How parents support a child's brain development encourages better learning in school and decision-making in life.

## How You Can Help:

- Listen first! Many times they are dealing with strong feelings while also testing their independence.
- take a deep breath, count to 10, and/or go to another room to calm down & think clearly, so you don't over-react (if a child can be unsupervised)
  - **ask your child/ren to do the same so you can both calm down and be ready to talk**
  - **thank your child/ren when they calm down**
- make sure you understand why they are challenging you; if they're not able to tell you, ask questions until you both agree where the conflict is coming from
  - **if they still can't tell you why they are arguing or pushing towards something you don't agree with... schedule a time to talk together so they can think about it**
- talk (don't yell or argue) with them
- be clear with them on what's expected
- ensure expectations are within reason and are proper for their age & developmental stage
- be consistent and fair
- celebrate success when power struggles are avoided
- celebrate your child/ren when they safely manage a new effort toward independence

