

## 25 Tips for Reducing Power Struggles

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- Keep in mind what they have been through
- Stay away from the “Us vs. Them” mentality (it’s not their life’s goal to make your life miserable!)
- Build rapport and productive relationships (let your kids know you care about them!)
- Don’t wait until a crisis occurs before addressing problematic behavior
- Engage the child in problem-solving and developing a social interest in the family (ex: identify your child’s interests and plan family activities around that)
- Don’t use counter aggression! (Manage your emotions)
- Avoid turning a small problem into a large one (apologize if necessary!)
- Understand and recognize your teen’s irrational beliefs (ex: “Everything must go my way!” “I don’t want to!”)
- Understand and identify how YOU deal with stress and anger in a conflict situation (how does this affect your relationship with your child?)
- Be a “broken record” – repeat the same answer in the same tone of voice
- Use “I” comments, not “you” statements (ex: “I feel like there is no respect for our home when the trash is not taken out.”)
- Stay centered and appear calm and controlled. Weakness can be exploited by teenagers.
- Use effective communication (remember that everyone’s perceptions are different, and we can never know what someone else is thinking or feeling)
- Be consistent with rules and schedules (and present a united front with other caregivers)



- Be both firm and kind (tone indicates desire to be kind, your follow-through indicates your firmness)
- Remember that it takes two to power struggle.
- Tell the child what you want, and use the phrases “I understand” the “I don’t agree, regardless/nevertheless I want you to...”
- Set rules for discussion (ex: use an indoor voice, allow others to talk)
- Give appropriate feedback if a rule is not open for discussion (“This is not open for discussion.”)
- Offer choices instead of commands. (ex: turn down the TV or turn it off and go read; you can sweep the kitchen or vacuum the living room)
- Pick your battles (if it does not involve the safety of the child)
- Use Active Listening – ask open ended questions, rephrase what you heard, reflect your child’s emotions, clarify statements, etc.
- Think before you speak (sarcasm can hurt your children and cause them to get defensive)
- If you have to command your child to do something, do so in a way that reduces the power struggle (approach them calmly, use a positive “do” statement instead of a “don’t” statement, be clear and descriptive, acknowledge them for being responsible and completing the task)
- Avoid the “need to win” arguments and try to find a win-win solution – try and compromise!

<https://www.ok.gov/odmhsas/documents/Long,%20Lanette%20-%20Reduction%20of%20Power%20Struggles.pdf>

