



## Getting Kids Ready for the Real World

### Avoiding Power Struggles

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(These topics are addressed more fully in the **Getting Kids Ready for the Real World** classes.)

- ★ When children begin to argue, do not engage. If you allow your child to argue to debate, what you are really saying is that your rules are negotiable. You can say:
  - “We are through talking about it. If you bring it up again, you’re going to have to spend the next five minutes by yourself in your room.”
  - “The time for discussion is over. You can do what I asked or you can spend the next five minutes in your room getting ready to do it. The choice is yours”
- ★ When children challenge you, give them limited choices and consequences. Be firm and consistent.
  - Restrict the number of choices you present. Example: “You can either clean up your room now or you can clean up your room and all the bathrooms later.”
  - Remember, the choices reflect your limits, state them firmly with eye contact.
- ★ Make your child responsible for his decisions and outcome. Remind him of this by saying “The choice is yours.”
- ★ If your child says he intends to comply but fails to do so, follow through quickly with a consequence.
- ★ It is OK to discuss your rules with the child, but make sure that the discussion follows your child’s compliance.
- ★ Address the attitude as well as the behavior. Disrespectful verbal or nonverbal behavior is never acceptable.
- ★ When children cross the line, hold firm.
- ★ When children dawdle in complying with your request, use a timer and deliver a consequence if compliance does not take place before the timer sounds.
- ★ Avoid personalizing the misbehavior. Make sure the child understands that you dislike the behavior, not the child.
- ★ When children get hot, cool them down.
  - Example: (When both sides are upset) “I think we both need a little time to cool down. Wait for me in your room and we’ll talk in about five minutes or however much time you need to cool down and be appropriate.”
  - Example: (When the parent is upset) “I’m feeling angry and I need some time to cool down.”
- ★ If you overreact or over-discipline, apologize; an apology from a caring parent gives children permission to be less than perfect.