

Parenting the Strong Willed Child

Here are some relationally savvy ways to get your power back as a parent:

- Give the child choices when you are able. This teaches the child decision-making skills and allows for some control while learning to follow rules.
- When possible, change your “No: to “yes” For example, “yes, you may visit with Sofia when you room is clean” gives your child a positive response while maintaining parental expectations.
- Let our child know what you want them to do, not what you don’t want.
- If you notice that your child is on the verge of escalating to an argument, you can matter-of-factly remind them of the consequence for non-compliance. Letting them know you will leave the room reduces power struggles by letting them choose which reinforces self-responsibility. In time, the consequence will be your child’s greatest teacher.
- Letting a child know ahead of time what is expected give the child a sense of control and will improve compliance.
- If you have a spouse or partner, develop couples strength. Parents who are well-versed on how to respond to a child’s difficult behavior will help prevent a child from trying to ‘play’ one parent off the other.
- Follow through in executing consequences for misbehavior is extremely important. These children are expert on detecting a parent’s bluff.
- Pay attention to your child when he or she is appropriate with their behavior This may be difficult at first since it is more instinctive to pay attention to a child who is misbehaving.
- Help your child to understand his or her feelings. In this way, a child may feel understood by you even if you do not agree with the misbehavior. It is by feeling understood that you may help avert difficult behavior.
- Let you r child know that when they can have a fairly good week, doing what they need to do without reminders, you will spend time that week dong an activity that they choose. This enlists them into the process of being cooperative while building ja better relationship.