

MINIMIZING POWER STRUGGLES



No matter how compliant a child, there will be times when he does not want to put on his socks, eat his food or pick up her toys. As young children develop, they begin to understand that they can make their own decisions. And occasionally they make a power play at an inconvenient time.

While a power play can be frustrating for the adult who is trying to get the child to do something, it is a healthy part of children's social/emotional development. These incidents help children develop a stronger sense of self.

We adults need to react appropriately. In many instances, trying to force the child to do what we want, actually escalates into a full-blown power struggle.

Try offering assistance instead. You might say, "You can put your socks on by yourself or I can help you. Which would you like?" Or, "I could help you put away your toys. Would you like that?"

Power plays are simply a part of growing up. When handled by adults in a calm manner, they offer opportunities for children to develop self-esteem and self-control.