

Power Struggles

Power struggles are essentially a situation in which two or more people or groups compete for control. According to Allen and Brian Mendler, authors of *Power Struggles: Successful Techniques for Educators*, 70-80% of challenging behavior is outside of school - and many of those behaviors can be attributed to power struggles. One of the most important goals of parenting is to grow our children into adults who have skills for thriving in the world and appropriate use of power is a skill that we need to model and teach. Oftentimes, power struggles are the result of a child needing or desiring one or more of the **THREE Cs**:

- **Control** - if a child does not feel they have any control - or maybe have too much, they will either “fight” for it or use it unproductively.
- **Communication** - behavior is a form of communication, and a child may be looking for connection or attention.
- **Competence** - the child may have a lagging skill and are therefore reluctant or unwilling to engage in activities requiring those skills.

When we step back from our own need for power and control, and consider instead what skill we want children to learn, we can be more strategic in our approach to a situation that could easily turn into a power struggle.

Check out the following articles for more information and ideas:

- [Dealing with Power Struggles](#)
- [Power Struggles: Who's in Control Here?](#)