

Who's In Control Here? Power Struggles and Young Children

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What is POWER?

An individual's need for Control.

Can adults relinquish control?

What Stops us from trusting children?

- Fear
- Insecurity
- "Better get used to it."
- Lack of power in our own lives
- Rules
- Lack of Self Confidence

What else?

Adults actually need to think about *how* they are using their power over children. They actually need to think about if the way they're using power is causing children to flourish or to shrivel up Inside.

The goal of adult authority should not be to crush the child's will and force the child into alignment with the adults will. Rather, the goal should be to develop and lift up the child's will with the child's well being in mind.

When Faced with Powerful Children Adults often:

- Perceive most behavior as deliberate noncompliance
- Attempt to "control"
- Neglect to address the needs of the child

- Engage in power struggles

“What is wrong with you?”

Most Common Behaviors that Teachers have reported:

- Biting
- Hitting or pinching
- Throwing objects
- Swearing
- Name calling
- Tattling
- Whining
- Refusing to share
- Disrupting circle time
- Running
- Throwing tantrums
- Non-participation

Why Power Opportunities?

- **Fewer Behavioral Issues**
- **Supports Children’s development**
- **Encourages Self- Expression**
- **Encourages Social Interactions**
- **Builds Self- Confidence**
- **Accepts and supports what children need**
- **It’s FUN**

What Does Power Look Like in Real Life?

Play Is Power:

- Play: is when children are able to decide
 - What they want to do
 - How they will do it and
 - Whom they will do it with
- It's not play if children don't have POWER

“A hazard is something a child does not see. A risk is a challenge a child can see and chooses to undertake or not. Eliminating risk leads to a child's inability to assess danger.”

We Have a Choice

- Adults have power to decide how we see children.
- Full or Empty?
- Ready or Deficient?

What We Learned?

- This was a project.
- We can say yes.
- They can change the classroom environment in dramatic and unexpected ways.
- We can “play.”
- *Develops Empathy*
- *Encourages Creativity*
- *Assists with Physical Development*

Tips for Supporting:

- Gather your thoughts before
- What are your limits and are they realistic
- Keep rules in the present
- Include children in the rule setting
- Use Model words or questions: “Did you ask?”
- Look at the space they are using
- Bring in local Heroes
- Help them feel powerful