



## Choose Your Battles: Helping Parents Focus on What Matters Most

Many power struggles happen because parents accidentally treat all behaviors as equally important. When everything becomes a hill to die on, children learn to fight over everything too. Before responding to your child's behavior, ask yourself, "Is this a.....?":

### SAFETY ISSUE

(Non-Negotiable)

Examples:

- Running into a parking lot
- Hitting a sibling
- Not wearing a seatbelt
- Playing with medication

These behaviors are non-negotiable.

**Parent Response:** Stay calm, firm, and consistent. Safety issues require immediate intervention and clear limits.

### VALUES ISSUE

(Teaching Opportunity)

Examples:

- Being respectful
- Honesty
- Completing responsibilities
- Treating others kindly

These behaviors matter because they help shape character and life skills.

**Parent Response:** Address these consistently, but remember they do not always need to be handled in the heat of the moment. Some of the best teaching happens after everyone has calmed down.

### PREFERENCE

(Consider Letting It Go)

Examples:

- Wearing mismatched socks
- Wanting cereal instead of toast
- Building a blanket fort in the living room
- Listening to the same song for the 100th time

Many power struggles disappear when parents realize:

***"This is annoying me, but it isn't actually important."***

Children benefit from having opportunities to make age-appropriate choices and express their individuality.

## The 5-Minute, 5-Day, 5-Year Rule

When you're unsure whether to address a behavior, ask yourself, "Will this matter in 5 minutes, 5 days, or 5 years?"

- **5 Minutes:** Consider letting it go.
- **5 Days:** Think about whether it is worth addressing.
- **5 Years:** This may be a safety, values, or character issue that deserves your attention.

***Not every behavior needs a consequence. Not every disagreement needs a battle. Focus your energy on what truly matters.***