

## Attend to your child's spirit.

You must work to teach your child to listen and obey, but the spirit is the essence of a child's character. Parents must work hard never to break/her spirit through harsh criticism, put downs, foul language or shaming.

## A Closing Thought

To be truly successful in raising and guiding a strong-willed child, parents must continue to be fair and respectful to themselves, to each other and to their children. It may be challenging and difficult, but

it is not impossible. Be sure to take opportunities to rejuvenate once in awhile to help recapture the patience that is required when living with a strong-willed child.

For more information on developing positive self-esteem, contact your Employee Assistance Program at 701.530.7195 or 800.327.7195

Remember, your Employee Assistance Program is:

- **Confidential:** All information is strictly between you and the counselor.
- **Informal:** A simple phone call starts the process, and there is no red tape.
- **Free:** Your employer has paid the fees. There's no charge for initial counseling services.



## Employee Assistance Program

310 North 10th Street  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
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## Employee Assistance Program

# Making Peace With Your Strong-Willed Child





## The Strong-Willed Child

Strong-willed children can be a handful-high energy, challenging and persistent. Some parents would refer to them as stubborn.

Oftentimes, these kids are prone to having power struggles with their parents. However, if parents can resist the urge to participate in every argument to which they're invited, they can become adept at eliminating power struggles. Parents can avoid power struggles by setting limits emphatically, giving choices and offering respect.

### Guiding Your Strong-Willed Child

Have a strong-willed child? You're lucky! Strong-willed children can be a challenge to parent when they're young, but if sensitively parented, they become terrific teens and young adults. Self-motivated and inner-directed, they go after what they want and are usually minimally influenced by peer pressure. As long as parents resist the impulse to "break their will," strong-willed kids often become leaders.

#### So, What Are Parents to Do?

**Balance your authority with your child's independence.**

Be firm, fair and consistent. However, there isn't a need to subdue our children. We must cultivate their independence but not at the expense of maintaining authority in our homes.

**Children want their parent's approval.**

They want to behave appropriately to please you but may not have the basic people skills or emotional intelligence to do so. Try to find techniques that work for you, and attempt to connect with your child.

#### Get your child's input.

Allow your child to use problem-solving skills. For example, "Bedtime is at 7 p.m. How do you want to work out getting ready for bed? When do you think is a good time to start getting ready for bed?"

#### Provide choices.

Strong-willed children need to have a say in what they do and how they do it. For example, "Do you want to brush your teeth now or in five minutes?"

#### Have a "cup half full" mentality.

Try to view all of your child's behavior in a positive light. It is easy to see the bad. If your child gives you a hard time about getting into the car to go to school, focus on the fact that he/she actually got in the car.

#### Use positive reinforcement.

Anytime your child behaves well, acknowledge it. We want our praise to be specific and descriptive.

#### Be a detective.

Try to find the reasons your child acts up and what sets him/her off in the first place. Once you identify the triggers, you can start to reduce or eliminate the causes for misbehavior.