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PREVENTING POWER STRUGGLES

AVOIDING BRIBERY, REWARDS AND NEGOTIATION IN FAVOR OF HELPING YOUNG CHILDREN MAKE GOOD CHOICES


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Developmental Context


By 18 months, children understand that they are separate individuals and that their actions have impacts.

Children want and need some sense of control. Seeking power is developmentally appropriate.

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MINDSHIFTS

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**Children are Not Misbehaving
on Purpose.**



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**Children need teaching,
not shaming.**



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**Don't take what young children
say or do at face value. They are
not acting with pre-meditated
intention.**




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Limits are Loving

They scaffold adaptation/flexibility and help children learn to manage life's frustrations and disappointments.


In other words, limits and boundaries build resilience.

They are also the key to preventing power struggles.



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Our job is to give children what they *need*, not necessarily what they *want*.




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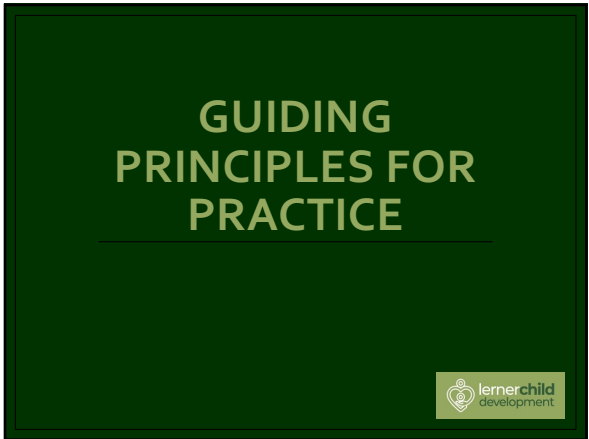
Children are Strategic, Not Manipulative

They are very clever at figuring out and working the system

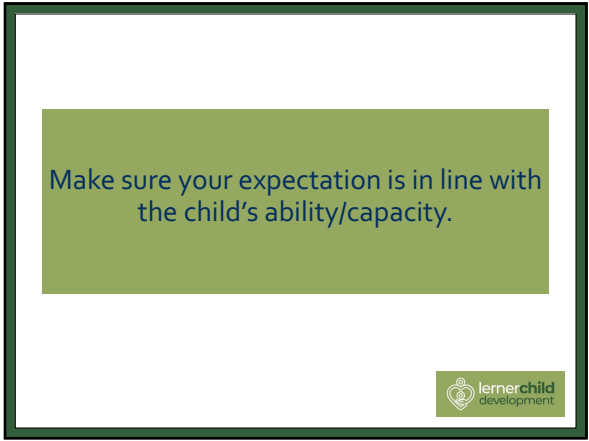
They employ any strategies that are successful: that result in their getting their way and/or getting a lot of attention.



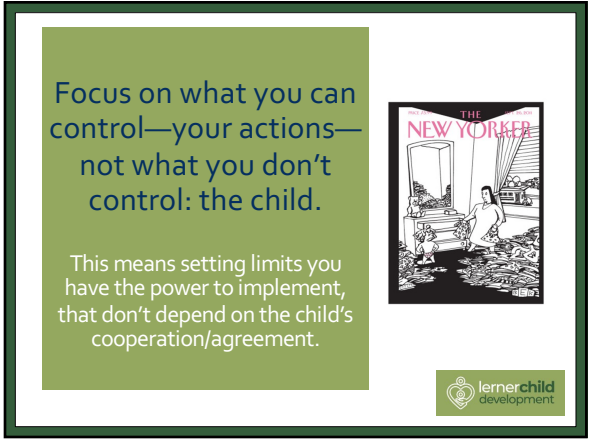
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Clearly communicate the expectation/direction as a "have-to."

Don't try to convince them to agree.



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Use the "Two Great Choices" to prevent the power struggle.



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Ensure there is a "safe space" where a child can be contained, if necessary, to be sure the teacher/parent/caregiver can remain calm, loving, and in charge.




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Repair Before Reflection

Once the situation is resolved, avoid corrections and teaching the child a lesson.

Reflect on the experience in a quiet moment, after there has been repair and reconnection.




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What *Not* To Do

Get harsh and punitive (no threats)

Reinforce strategies for gaining power that are not acceptable/good for them, such as tantrums or negotiation

Take the bait!



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