

# ASK P&C

**POWER STRUGGLE:** *Everything is a battle of wills with my children when I want them to cooperate. How can I win?*

—Tammy Y., Hoboken, NJ

**WE ALL** become parents because we want the loving experiences that nurturing young children can bring. And yet, sometimes we get mired in negative interactions and it's hard to find our way out. In order for your will to "win," you want to change the dynamic so that both you *and* your children win!

Instead of arguing with your children, you might try turning your request into a game. At clean-up time, for example: "I bet I can pick up the yellow cars before you pick up the black ones." Or to get them moving: "And the Kentucky Derby is about to begin—Who will be the first racehorse to reach the bathroom?" You might also try teamwork, unifying for a common goal: "When we all get the living room cleaned up, we can have dessert!" But it's important to keep in mind that when it comes down to it, you are the parent and your little ones need to learn to follow your rules.

**ROAD RULES:** *Now that my kids are older—7, 9, and 11—I spend hours driving them to and from activities. They misbehave terribly while I'm behind the wheel. Any suggestions for getting them to keep it cool while on the road?*

—Dana K., Eugene, OR

**JUST WHEN** our kids become more

Developmental psychology expert Michelle Anthony answers your questions about your child's social, emotional, and behavioral development at home and in school. **THIS MONTH:** power struggles, bad behavior in the car, and refusing to get out of the bathtub.



independent with friendships and interests, they become more *dependent* on us to get them from place to place. Here are some tips to make the journey more enjoyable:

**Involve your children** in a discussion about setting rules and the consequences of breaking them. ("We all agreed there would be no shouting in the car.") Children are much more likely to abide by decisions they have been a part of making.

**Keep them occupied** with

books, travel games, music headsets, snacks, audio books, etc.

**Use the time** to connect. Kids are sometimes most forthcoming when they're in the backseat where you can't look directly at them. Talk and ask questions!

**RUB-A-DUB-A-DUBBY:** *When my 3- and 5-year-old are in the tub, it's always a*

*challenge to get them out. What can I do to make the transition to bedtime run more smoothly?*

—Stacy F., Bethesda, MD

**WHEN YOUR** children are doing something fun like playing in the bath, it's no surprise that they're hesitant to stop to do something less fun (getting ready for bed). Try these ideas:

**Sing a song** together. Take a familiar tune and add new lyrics about the end of bathtime. Things can be much smoother with a song to distract, entertain, and guide.

**Use a timer.** Children have a poor concept of time, so giving them a 5-minute warning means little. Get an interesting timer (like one that drips colored oil through water) and tell them that when all the color drops fall, the bath is over. Many children become so involved in watching the timer, they happily announce, "Mommy! It's done! It's time to get out!"

**Offer options.** Do they want to brush their teeth before or after storytime? Read this book or that? Kids get excited about making choices on their own. **P&C**



Have a question you'd like P&C to answer? E-mail it to [AskPC@scholastic.com](mailto:AskPC@scholastic.com).

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