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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

from HANNAFORD'S SUPERMARKETS

- February 17, 2019**
 Willa Frazier, daughter of Angie and Chad Frazier, Marlborough, 8
- February 19, 2019**
 Rylee Elizabeth, daughter of Amber Dunham, Keene, 2
- February 20, 2019**
 Jada Lynne Castor, daughter of Derek and Shannon Castor, Keene, 2
- February 23, 2019**
 Noelle Boniface, daughter of Kyle and Amanda Boniface, Winchester, 1
- February 24, 2019**
 Kyler Boniface, son of Kyle and Amanda Boniface, Winchester, 5
- February 26, 2019**
 Owen Soltysiak, son of Heidi and Paul Soltysiak, Keene, 5
 Layton Tayne Clark, son of Eric and Chelsea Clark, Westmoreland, 2

This Week's Birthday Cake Winners Are:
Noelle Boniface, Winchester, 1
Owen Soltysiak, Keene, 5



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HANNAFORD'S BIRTHDAY CAKE

winners last week were:



Iressa Miller, Swanzey, 5



Harrison May, Sullivan, 4

Picture Unavailable

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 West Street, Keene, NH

BIRTHDAY CAKE DRAWING

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- All boys and girls through age 12 are eligible.
- Entries must be mailed; no phone calls, please.
- Forms must be received *two weeks before* child's birthday.

PRINT OR TYPE CLEARLY

CHILD'S NAME _____
 AGE* _____ SEX _____ PHONE _____
 BIRTHDATE _____
 PARENTS' NAME (S) _____
 ADDRESS _____

*Age child will be on this birthday.

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Avoid Power Struggles And Help Kids Develop Autonomy

One of the challenges that many parents experience is concern that they are losing control of their kids. Sometimes, the more parents try to take control, the less they feel that they have. Feeling like parental control is slipping often leads to increased anxiety, leaving parents feeling desperate to correct the issue, manifesting in arguments, expressions of anger, and sometimes efforts to coerce cooperation from kids. In some cases, parents become so exhausted that they simply give up and give in to children's wishes.

Many children are good at engaging in behaviors that help them get their needs (and wants) met. This behavior is not problematic and can be a positive attribute, but it can also create challenging situations as children start to test and argue with parents. Parenting can feel like a huge power struggle, with the parents on the losing side.

Parents have the job of setting rules and expectations for their children. Sometimes parents look for kids to start to do these things on their own once they learn the expectation, but that is often unrealistic. Despite how many times parents explain the importance of cleaning up after oneself and pointing out how their behaviors impact others, most kids don't automatically start thinking about situations the way parents hope. The importance of bringing dishes to the sink or picking towels up off the bathroom floor simply isn't a priority for most kids.

As kids get older, these power struggles are likely to become more intense. They reach developmental stages that require them to differentiate from the family and start to make choices independent of parents. The struggle for power in the parent-child relationship is an inherent part of the growing up process.

Ultimately, kids (and sometimes parents) need to learn how to disagree without getting into a fight about it. No one likes to feel powerless, and attempts to gain power are a natural way for children to get more autonomy. As kids grow, it is important for them to learn to be more independent, and they do this by gaining more power and responsibility. Parents want kids to become autonomous and responsible, but sometimes struggle with allowing kids to do more on their own. Kids want to gain freedom, but struggle with how to accomplish that without crossing into defiance.

When parents and kids get into power struggles, it can feel to parents that their children are trying to control them. Kids are often just responding to something they perceive as unfair. Parents perceive the child as being very defiant, while the children see it as standing up for themselves. Perception is key in these situations, because each feels that they are right.

When this happens, parents sometimes try to explain to their children and get them to understand their thinking, but this often leads to more arguing

and discord. Ultimately, it isn't effective to get kids to see things from the parents' point of view. Rather, view this moment of disagreement as an opportunity to help kids learn to express their differing opinion more appropriately, to learn to negotiate, and to help children learn that with increased autonomy comes increased responsibility and accountability. We don't want to teach children not to have a difference of opinion, but to present this opinion in a respectful manner.

Monadnock Family
 with Sheri Lapointe



Power struggles are normal ways for children to begin to gain more autonomy, but their time line for gaining more control may be faster than what parents feel is reasonable. Use these opportunities to make compromises that allow kids to develop some autonomy and demonstrate responsibility.

Allow your child to go to a friend's house and give a set time to expect her home. Give her the ability to demonstrate that she can be responsible by coming home by the agreed-upon time. The next time your child asks to do something independent, base your decision on how well she showed responsibility the time before.

If your child is making a case to have a later bedtime, discuss your concerns about how that will impact his ability to get up for school. Agree to give it a trial period, and use the evidence of how your child does getting up for school the next few days to determine if you will maintain that later bedtime. You don't need to engage in drawn-out argument if your decision is based on your child's own actions.

Children will naturally engage in some arguments from time to time. Parents who meet these arguments with an understanding of this as a child's need to test boundaries and increase autonomy will be less likely to engage in ineffective power struggles. If parents take time to listen to their children's points of view and have enough flexibility to compromise, they can avoid the power struggles while remaining in control of the situation.

Sheri Lapointe is a licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor with a Master's Degree from Antioch New England University. She works as a family counselor with Waypoint (formerly Child and Family Services). She also has many years of experience teaching in local schools. Send comments to her at The Monadnock Shopper News, P.O. Box 487, Keene, NH 03431.

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