



5+ Quick Tips for More Laughing and Less Fighting

1) Consistency is Key

Learning is about growing brain cells and connections between brain cells, which takes time and consistency. So just like with medication, you need to try it for at least a month before you will even know what effect it has on your child.

2) An Escalated Adult Can't De-Escalate an Escalated Child

Our kids bug us. That is just the honest truth. Before we redirect their behavior, we have to calm ourselves first because they have special brain cells called mirror neurons. These mirror neurons sync their brains and bodies up to ours. If we get upset, the only thing their body is capable of doing is continuing to be upset or getting even more upset.

3) Calm Your Body First

Easier said than done right?!?!?! First, write that down somewhere. "Calm down isn't as easy as it sounds." And then, remind yourself the next time you are telling your child they need to calm down.

Second, the trick is to calm your body, not your brain first. It's not about thinking different; it's about doing different. Try these strategies:

- + **Heavy Feet:** Imagine you have iron boots on your feet. Walk, sway, and wiggle as though they are incredibly heavy.
- + **Dramatic breathing:** Use your whole body to breathe by leaning backwards when you breathe in and flopping forward when you breathe out.
- + **Make Space:** Step one of your feet backwards and to the side so your body is at an angle to the child's. This L-shape opening makes us feel calmer and makes our kids feel the same.

4) Give a Choices As Much As Possible

I heard you think "But, sometimes I need them to do something and there just isn't a choice." But just hear me out. Kids, especially ages 3-6, are literally designed to try to develop a sense of power and capability. They need to think you believe they can do things, which is why they get so angry every time you tell them what to do. It implies that you think they aren't capable of deciding.

What's the solution???? Give them a choice where all the answers work. If you need to leave the house by 7:30 to get to school on time, then after they get dressed ask if they want to put their shoes on before or after breakfast. If bedtime is 8 p.m. sharp, then ask if they would like to go to their room at 7:30 and read two stories before bed, or at 7:45 and only read one story. They will never notice you still told them what time they have to go to bed.

5) Replace No.

Yes, you are correct. Your child does need to learn to just accept the word no. But they don't have to learn at age 4, and they don't have to learn while you are trying to get to work on time. Save the no battle for age 10 and in the middle of a Saturday afternoon. Try these instead:

- Yes, after dinner (or tomorrow, or on Friday).
- Not yet, first I need to . . . (or need you to . . .).
- I don't think that is a safe choice because . . . (concrete is hard and that looks like a big risk for falling headfirst onto it).
- That's a creative idea. I wonder if you noticed . . . (the bees on that tree, the sign that says its not allowed, or the face your friend is making).
- What do you think my answer to that question is? Why?