Dare to Parent!

It may be tempting as a new parent to take more of a hands-off approach when your child is placed in your home. You may get this feeling that they won't like you if you ask them to do chores or follow the house rules, when in reality, you will be setting the tone for the rest of their life in your house. You may come into the idea that your child needs some time to adjust into your home before you impose limits, and so you treat them like a guest. The fact is your child needs that consistency and structure. They need to be told what to do, how to act, what the rules are, etc. Your child may resist and fight you every step of the way, but you need to remember that this child you just adopted is in great need of structure and a strong parental figure. Chances are, they didn't have that growing up, or they had multiple caregivers. By being your child's parent, you will show them consistency, which will allow them to learn to trust overtime.

How to be in control

The following are ways that you can show your child that you are the one in control. Don't think of control as a bad thing, either. "Control" conjures up all sorts of negative stereotypes and connotations, when in this instance, it's actually a positive.

Pick Your Battles-Your child may pick multiple fights with you during the day, so respond to the ones that you know you will win. Avoid battles over control when possible. Examples include wetting the bed, eating dinner, and he-said/she-said battles. Timing is also important, so plan ahead when possible. If your child puts up a fight every time you leave the house, start the transition into leaving early, so by the time you need to leave, your child is ready.

Win your battles-Look for ways that you and your child can both win. Avoid fighting with your child day after day. Instead, look for win-win scenarios. This will show your child that you both can get what you want, without hours of fighting.

Remember that YOU are in charge

As a parent, it is your job to be in charge. Your child may give off the attitude that they want to be in control. Maybe your child was the "parent" to their siblings, so they feel that they need to continue being their parent. But you need to understand that this child *wants y*ou to be the one taking control. When you let your child take control, you are going to lose. You lose your sense of responsibility as a parent, and you also lose your child's faith. Your child will also lose-they will lose their faith in you as a parental figure and someone they can count on. When you are in charge, your child will ultimately feel safer, and you will feel like the parent. And above all else, your child will take on the most important role they can-being a child.

For more suggestions and examples, visit the *Adoptive Families* article here

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