

# WHO'S IN CHARGE – YOU OR THE KIDS?

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If you don't feel in control in your home, then you aren't - but someone else is. I am constantly astonished at the low quality of family life that parents accept because their homes are in disarray. Their children are disrespectful and to have thought of anyone but themselves.

This situation comes about when parents do not have a clear grasp of what parenting responsibilities really are, or they know what a peaceful family looks like but don't know how to get there themselves.

Parenting is a difficult job, especially when, until recent years, there really hasn't been much formal training. We have tended to default to whatever our parents did. Some was good and some wasn't so good.

So how do you 'take charge'? You establish a line of authority. You are not your children's friend. You are their parents. You set the ground rules and the whole family abides by those rules/values. Consequences and rewards are set in place to ensure the expectations are met. Authority is strong when both parents are in agreement and are rock solid in their decisions. The minute one wavers, children will see a weak spot and pound on it until the authority gives way. Inconsistency in parents is a common factor in children taking over.

An authority figure is one who trains and encourages success. You need to train your children to do things from an early age like: family chores, making a bed, and later making things like building a cart, fixing a car, grocery shopping, and handling money. Kids feel good about themselves when they learn new skills. Parents need to take time to discover their children's uniqueness, encourage them to succeed, help them through failure and difficult times.

Authority is maintained when it is always physically there. Absence of the established authority figure will cause someone else to take over. Authority will be undermined when there is unfairness, harshness, a lack of love, neglect or abuse. Authority is undermined when there is no 'order' in the home, and when there are no regular routines.

Children need to know when things are happening and what is expected of them. You don't have to earn the right to be in control of your own home. You are automatically in that position when you become parents. We all feel at a loss at times when our children throw us a curve ball. However, we do have the opportunity to learn how to create happy, healthy relationships within our families and, by doing so, our children learn from us how to become positive role models within society, and within the families they create.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sally@forefrontfamilies.org](mailto:sally@forefrontfamilies.org). We invite you to also check out our website at [www.forefrontfamilies.org](http://www.forefrontfamilies.org) and our blog site at [www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com](http://www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com) for further assistance.