



# Counselor's Corner

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## How to Manage Passive-Aggressive Behavior in Children

by ASHLEY FARLEY Aug 22, 2015  
[liverstrong.com](http://liverstrong.com)

A passive-aggressive child attempts to gain power over their parents by ignoring demands, questions and responsibilities. According to Empowering Parents, passive-aggressive children don't know how to communicate when they are feeling angry or anxious, and, instead of acting out, they become resistant and closed off emotionally. If you have a passive-aggressive child you might find yourself chasing them all over the house, constantly reminding them of their chores and homework and inevitably helping them complete their responsibilities.

**Step 1:** Stay calm and remain in control of your emotions. It can be easy to get into an argument with your child when they are being passive-aggressive, giving excuses or becoming upset. Remember that your child's behavior is their coping mechanism and when you remain firm and in control you will help to de-escalate the situation.

**Step 2:** Split up your child's responsibilities. Breaking one task into several smaller tasks can make the task seem more manageable and less frustrating for the child. For example, if the child has a homework assignment you can ask them to work for 30-minute intervals through the course of the night or to split it in half.

**Step 3:** Eliminate distractions when your child has a task to perform. Turn off the TV, radio and game systems and put them in an area where other children are not playing. Put your child in an area with an open door so that you can monitor their progress.

**Step 4:** Remain firm and consistent with your child. If you ask your child to do something, do not give in to their passive-aggressive behavior or concede about the expectations you have given them. Remind your child of the task at hand and stick with your request; over time they will learn that you will not give in or cave.

**Step 5:** Provide assistance to your child. Help your child begin a chore or homework assignment if they seem to be struggling with getting started. For example, if your child is supposed to do the laundry but is anxious about doing it correctly, pour the detergent into the washing machine and then tell him to finish the rest of the task.

**Step 6:** Set clear consequences for inappropriate behavior. If you set a rule, ask your child to do something or request a specific action and they do not follow through, set a fair and rational consequence for them. For example, if you ask your child to finish their homework before watching television and they only finish half of it before turning on the television, your response could be that they are denied TV for a certain number of days.

**Step 7:** Avoid situations that put your child in control of others. Avoid situations such as "We can all go get ice cream after you wash the dishes". This allows your child to control all family members and does not put any real consequences in place for their behavior. It will only exacerbate their passive-aggressive behavior.



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