

Rolling with **RESISTANCE**

Working with kids to create healthy habits can be hard, especially when they resist making changes. Building new habits takes time. It is normal for children to argue, get angry, sulk, or throw fits, but this behavior will get better soon if you “roll with resistance.”



1 Realize that resistance is normal. It is completely normal for children to resist change. They are used to eating certain foods and choosing how to spend their free time. It is normal for kids to get upset and angry when changes are made. Remember that it is not your fault and your child is not a “bad kid” for resisting.

2 Remember that these are temporary reactions. Hang in there! Kids will stop resisting when they learn that resisting doesn’t work. This could take 3-14 days, depending on the age of the child.

3 Be consistent. Giving in to your child when they get upset about healthy eating and activity does not make it any easier for your child to learn healthy habits. In fact, it makes it harder. It is important to send a **consistent** message to your child. Giving in when your child gets upset will teach your child that resisting gets their way.

4 Catch ‘em being good. It’s important to praise your child when they are good, such as listening the first time or getting involved in meal preparation. This could be a simple “great job” when they try a new food all on their own, or get ready for school on time. Not only will this make them feel good about themselves, it will show them you’re not the bad guy. Try to “catch” your child being good at least once each day.

5 Parents need support. How do you stay strong as a parent? It can be challenging to make sure you stay calm and not respond to your child in anger, but will be helpful to make sure the situation doesn’t get worse. Find time to talk about your parenting challenges with friends, family, spouses, and your interventionist – we are here for you!

6 Make being healthy FUN! Try having your child “trade” unhealthy habits for something healthy and fun. For example, say that you are taking the TV out of the bedroom so they can put a craft station in their room, or spend more time practicing a favorite sport. Also, involve your child in making choices, like what food to make or what game to play before bed. They will enjoy this and be more excited about trying new nutritious foods or routines.