

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE — TO HELPING — YOUNG PEOPLE GROW SKILLS *Without Power Struggles*



Build Confidence

Empower young people to believe in themselves.



Develop Skills

Practical strategies for real-world growth.



Strengthen Relationships

Create trust without power struggles.



Foster Independence

Support young people to thrive on their own.



REAL CONNECTION. REAL GROWTH.
STRONGER COMMUNITIES.

INTRODUCTION:

Supporting young people to grow skills and independence can feel harder than it should.

You might find yourself:



Repeating reminders



Managing big emotional reactions



Feeling stuck between protecting and pushing

This guide helps you
reframe what's happening
for a calmer way forward.



WHY POWER STRUGGLES *HAPPEN.*

THEY START WHEN:



EXPECTATIONS
EXCEED SKILLS



ADULTS FEEL
PRESSURE TO
“MAKE PROGRESS”



YOUNG PEOPLE
FEEL
OVERWHELMED



COMMUNICATION
BREAKS DOWN



BEHAVIOUR BECOMES *THE MESSAGE:*

REFUSAL, SHUTDOWN, ARGUMENT, AVOIDANCE
ARE SIGNS THAT SOMETHING IS TOO MUCH.



REAL CONNECTION. REAL GROWTH.
STRONGER COMMUNITIES.

SECTION 2:

What Skill-Building Is

✗ IT IS NOT:

- ✗ Compliance
- ✗ Obedience
- ✗ Perfection
- ✗ Learning faster under pressure

✓ IT IS:

- ✓ Breaking tasks into learnable steps
- ✓ Practising when calm
- ✓ Allowing mistakes without shame
- ✓ Gradually reducing support



Section 3:

WHY POWER STRUGGLES BLOCK LEARNING.



When a young person feels rushed, judged, cornered, or misunderstood, their ability to learn drops.



Energy goes into self-protection and regaining control, not learning a new skill.



Learning happens best when young people feel safe enough to try.

SECTION 4:

A SHIFT THAT CHANGES *Everything.*

Move from...
**“HOW DO I
GET THEM
TO DO THIS?”**



To...
**“HOW DO I
HELP THEM
LEARN THIS?”**



This shift changes **tone, timing, expectations,** and **outcomes.**

*Skill-building is a
process, not a test.*

SECTION 5:

BUILDING SKILLS WITHOUT TAKING OVER.



Supporting only the hardest step
and letting the young person do the rest.



Confidence grows
when young people experience
themselves as capable.



Allow effort to matter
more than speed.



SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES
AUSTRALIA

*Enjoying
this so far??*



Share it with someone
who might need it



Contact **Yos**
if you need help.



yosmerys@supportingcommunitiesaustralia.com

*Together, we can
build stronger communities.*



SECTION 6:

WHY CHOICE MATTERS

Choice is not about **giving up boundaries**.
It gives young people a sense of agency,
practice making decisions, and
experience with responsibility.

The key is bounded choice:
two safe options,
clear limits, and
consistency in follow-through.





SECTION 7:

WHEN EMOTIONS GET IN THE WAY.



Big reactions often appear
when learning is asked for.



When emotions are high,
problem-solving drops and
frustration rises.



The most helpful response is
pausing—once calm returns,
learning can resume.



Choosing timing
supports growth.



CALM FIRST. LEARNING NEXT. GROWTH ALWAYS.



Section 8:

Progress Looks Different Than You Expect.

It doesn't always look like finishing the task. Sometimes it's starting when they usually refuse, staying calmer, or asking for help instead of shutting down.



Don't miss real growth by defining success too narrowly.

Section 9:

Independence Is Built *WITH* Young People.



Independence doesn't come from being left alone.

It comes from guided practice, consistent support, gradual responsibility, and trust built over time.

Adults fade support carefully,
step by step—side by side,
not from a distance.



SECTION 10 & 11:

WHY THIS APPROACH WORKS.



Research shows young people learn best when **relationships** are strong, expectations are clear, and **support is scaffolded**.



When adults focus on **skill-building instead of control**, young people are more likely to **engage, practise, persist, and succeed**.

SECTION 12:

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE.



Power struggles don't teach skills.
Safety and dignity matter.



**Young people need
preparation**—not just protection.



This guide is part of the
Elevate Youth Lab™ approach.



**You don't need to do everything at once;
you just need a clearer way forward.**



SECTION 13:

ABOUT US

Elevate Youth Lab™ is a capacity-building framework developed by Supporting Communities Australia.

We work alongside young people with disabilities and trauma backgrounds to support the development of everyday independence in real-world settings, safely, gradually, and with dignity.

This resource is part of the official **Elevate Youth Lab™** tools.

REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

This guide is grounded in well-established research:



Bronfenbrenner (1979)

Ecology of Human Development



Vygotsky (1978)

Mind in Society



Diamond (2013)

Executive Functions



Ryan & Deci (2000)

Intrinsic Motivation



Shonkoff (2012)

Adversity and Toxic Stress



A NOTE ON PRACTICE:

This guide reflects a developmental,
non-clinical approach.



**SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES
AUSTRALIA**

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**Compassionate
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Change**