

7 DAYS

MetroLife

Food, fashion, movies and more...

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'The Empire Strikes Back', Episode V of the Star Wars saga, was released in 1980. Want to watch it? 'Do, or do not, there is no try,' as Yoda might say...



So who's in charge around here?

You might be older and wiser but the little one could be lording it...



I REFUSE TO WEAR A LIGHT LAYERED LOOK TODAY: Mums and dads know that little ones often like to have their own way. But one expert can help everyone play happy families again

Yes, your baby is small and perfectly formed.

But don't let those angelic looks fool you.

Contrary to your understanding of the situation, junior thinks they are the boss in your family relationship.

And the longer you let that situation continue, the tougher things could be in your household. So says Brenda Hart, a child and baby expert who is in Dubai from today, and ready to dish out advice to sleep-deprived and baffled parents during special seminars or invaluable one-on-one consultations.

The situation is all new to wide-eyed and frazzled mums and dads. But Brenda's been working with babies for more than 30 years.

"In maybe all, or a lot of the 'worst-case scenarios', when I have been called in by parents at their wit's end, the child is ruling the roost," says Brenda. "And that is the core of all these issues. The children haven't been directed, and they like to be in charge. So whether they are not eating, only eating what they want or whatever, they are showing that they like to be in charge."

Fear not. Whether you are facing constant battles at bedtime or your little one just will not let you change that nappy, your tiny terror is not some little dictator in the making.

Brenda says: "Don't worry, this is a natural human instinct, they like to do it their own way. You give children an inch and they take a mile."

"That is good in the long run because it will help them later in life."

"But not when they are so small, because they don't know what is right or wrong. It is a human instinct to want to push boundaries - we all do it. But children have to learn that. They will, if they have the opportunity to first push those boundaries. "There is nothing wrong with it, it shows

that they want to better themselves and to be like that is not a bad thing."

Of course, that's not the whole story. Take for example night time. Not all little ones 'sleep like a baby' and that can affect the whole family.

That's not solely about boundaries. There are all sorts of reasons why your pride and joy - and by default the rest of the household - are out of sync in the sleep department. But Brenda believes most problems can be resolved within 48 hours if you bring in the experts. That's why she will be offering personal two-hour consultations on sleep training, and children's behaviour issues.

On top of that, she's also hosting special group seminars on potty training and fussy eaters, all at Apple Seeds playspace.

Having helped more than one thousand families so far in her career, there are very few scenarios likely to faze her.

And don't worry, this isn't some idea that may not translate into the heat of the UAE summer. Brenda has extensive experience of babies in the region having worked in the Special Care Baby Unit in the Corniche Hospital, Abu Dhabi.



EASY DOES IT: Brenda Hart and friends

Parents may have mixed feelings about calling in expert help but they should sleep easy. Brenda says: "When I go in and try to rectify these issues or help guide the parents along the process, I don't change the character of the child. The child will stay the same. It is the parents who need help, they need to know what they are doing and feel more confident - that will filter through to the child. If a small child is ruling the roost then the parents will be tired and wrecked and something will have to change because it will not do the parents, or the child, any good in the short term and long run."

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Brenda Hart will be at Apple Seeds, Dubai Gold and Diamond Park from today until May 25. Call 04 380 6064

Is the boss causing havoc in your home? Tell us at [facebook.com/7DAYSUAE](https://www.facebook.com/7DAYSUAE)