



Following the Rules

Rules promote order, safety, and fairness. They help us to get along with others. Rules provide limits and guidelines young children need. When we follow the rules, it shows that we are responsible and know how to do the right thing. It also means that we care about others and ourselves.

Rules Should Be:

- **Few in number.** Pick only 3-5 rules that are really important to you.
- **Be observable.** State what you want to see. What does good behavior look like?
- **Stated in a positive way.** Tell your child what you want her "to do," not what you "don't" want her to do.
- **Applicable** throughout the day or in a lot of situations.

Tips for Parents:

- ✓ **Get your child's input.** Children feel rules are "fair" if they have a say in creating them.
- ✓ **Talk about your family's rules.** Review them everyday until your child understands them.
- ✓ **Post the rules** where everyone can see them. Use simple words or use pictures to help your child remember the rules.
- ✓ **Use consequences** when children choose to break the rules.
- ✓ **Praise** your child for following the rules.
- ✓ **Celebrate** when your child follows the rules.

Help Your Child Learn to Follow the Rules. Try these activities:

- Talk about family rules that you have in your home. Make a list together and hang it up.
- Play games with your child. Be sure to explain the rules. Try: Go Fish!, Memory™, Chutes & Ladders™, kickball, Duck-Duck-Goose, Mother May I?, Simon Says, Hide & Seek, or Follow the Leader. Help your child follow the rules.
- Talk with your child about different community rules or laws, such as whispering in the library or wearing a seatbelt. Point out signs that explain community rules: "The sign says the speed limit is 30 mph." "The sign says no dogs allowed." "The sign says don't walk."
- Talk with your child about what would happen if people did not follow rules.

Book Suggestions

Following Rules by Casie Mayer • If Everybody Did by Jo Ann Stover •
Know and Follow the Rules by Cheri J. Meiners M.Ed. and Cheri J. Meiners