



How Can I Begin Setting Limits for My Child?

Discipline promotes your child's growing sense of self-control and teaches children that we respect ourselves and others. Children learn by exploring the objects and people in their environment. They want to learn how things work. When they do something "bad," they usually want to see what will happen next.

Parents can:

- Set limits on behaviors clearly, firmly, consistently, and with love.
- Stay calm and use your sense of humor!
- Give babies and toddlers some choices that they can make every day.
- When you set limits on a behavior, follow through quickly and clearly.
- Do not threaten to follow through if you do not plan to follow through.
- Distract your child with a toy or another activity.
- Remove him from the scene gently if necessary.
- Save your battles for the big issues that keep your child safe
- Give alternatives when you say no: "You can play here _____."
- Give your child one safe area of the home where she can freely explore.
- Put breakables, valuables, and extension cords out of reach. Cover outlets.
- Catch your baby showing cooperative behaviors and praise her!
- Praise these behaviors and praise her for just being herself.
- If you catch yourself feeling angry, take five minutes to feel calm and then set limits.
- Try a verbal warning, then count to three out loud to allow your child time to stop on his own.
- You may hear protests at first, but gradually your child will accept and expect you to set limits for him. You help to make his world secure and predictable.

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