



FAMILY RULES

Family rules can make raising children and running a household easier and smoother. However, many parents are stumped when it comes to how to make family rules and how to stick to them.

There are many advantages to having established family rules. Rules let children know what is expected of them. They provide consistency and structure in the home which helps to create a safe and nurturing environment. Family rules about chores give everyone a role and responsibility in the functioning of the home and help members feel they are an important and contributing part of the family. Finally, family rules about communication can head off problems, such as a child asking permission from dad after mom had said no.

Here are some general guidelines for establishing family rules:

- First parents or parent come up with a list of FEW family rules. These can include chores and manners and should be realistic and age appropriate
- Family rules should apply to EVERYONE in the household.
- Family rules should be in the positive rather than negative (“You may watch TV for one hour after completing homework” is better than “you cannot watch TV unless you completed your homework.”)
- Rewards and consequences should be linked to family rules. Rewards can include praises, allowances, special treats, and playing games with parents or going to the park. Rewards do not have to cost anything and in fact one of the best rewards is verbal praises. Family rules, rewards and consequences should be written and then be introduced to children in a family meeting.
- Children can have a input in the rules, rewards and consequences, however parents have the final say.
- Family rules are a work in progress and can be changed or modified as necessary.
- Weekly family meetings are a good place to assess how the rules are working.
- Finally in order for parents to be successful at implementing family rules, parents **MUST BE** consistent.

If parents have any further questions, please contact Greenbelt CARES at 301-345-6660.