

ESTABLISH FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

- State expectations positively -- Make sure you are telling kids what you want them TO DO instead of what you want them NOT TO DO. (For example, “Use words to solve problems with your sister”, instead of, “Don’t fight with your sister”).
- Too many rules gets confusing – Limit the number of family expectations to 3 to 5. Focus on the most important house issues. (For example, Be responsible for your belongings, Use words to solve problems, Follow directions).
- Don’t be afraid to re-evaluate – If a rule isn’t working, then don’t be afraid to rewrite or reset a new expectation.
- Expectations should pass the 3 “clear rule” tests.



1. The Stranger Test

Based solely on your description, could a complete stranger understand what your rule is describing?

2. The “So What?” Test

Is the concern worth changing? Does it really matter? (For example, is it really important to you that the bed is made before school starts?)

3. The Dead Man Test

Have I written the rule in positive language? If a dead man can do it, *then you have not told the child what you want them TO DO.* (For example, a dead man can stop picking on his sister, but only a live man can use words to solve problems)