

THREE RULES FOR DISCIPLINE

THAT YOUR KIDS PARTICIPATE IN

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“Regardless of what rules you have in your home, we have found it successful to let our kids participate in developing discipline rules.”

1. Connect the Consequence to the Behavior

Consequences that are connected to the behavior are more effective. For example, if your son gets in trouble while playing his Xbox, rather than making him scrub toilets, remove his Xbox privileges for a set amount of time. Connect the consequence to the behavior.

TIP: Sit down with your kids and let them participate in establishing rules and consequences. Use “if/then” statements: “If” you do _____, “then” _____ is the consequence. Keep track of these, and the next time your kids break an agreed-upon rule, they’ll already know the consequence. This also releases you from the stress of having to come up with a consequence on the spot.

2. “We Do Not Throw Fits to Get What We Want”

We all know adults who throw fits to get what they want, but we don’t want our kids to act that way. Setting clear boundaries around tantrums will help your kids better control their emotions and reactions. The key is talking to them before the fit happens, rather than trying to intervene once the fit has already started. We have a rule in our house that our kids know word-for-word: “*We do not throw fits to get what we want.*” When a fit begins, we make our kids say the rule out loud: “We do not throw fits to get what we want.” This allows them to participate in defusing the situation. They know that whatever they are trying to get by throwing a tantrum is immediately off the table, and they are free to throw their fit for as long as they want while sitting on their beds. When they participate in the de-escalation process, it helps keep everyone — even Mom and Dad — from overreacting.

3. Contracts and Agreements

Building a contract with your kids will help you set clear boundaries and expectations. Common Sense Media (commonsensemedia.org) is a great resource for parents that offers contract templates your family can use. Discuss each section with your kids and mark your agreed-upon decisions. If both parties agree, you both sign it. Then, put your contract somewhere that everyone in the family can see it regularly.

On a scale of 1–10 (1 = poor, 10 = excellent)

In your home, how connected are the consequences to the behaviors?

① _____ 5 _____ ⑩

What “If/Then” statements do you already have set up in your home? Are there any new ones you’d like to add? (Don’t forget to involve your kids!)

If my child does _____ then his/her consequences are _____.

If my child does _____ then his/her consequences are _____.

If my child does _____ then his/her consequences are _____.

If my child does _____ then his/her consequences are _____.

On a scale of 1–10 (1 = poor, 10 = excellent)

How do you handle your kids throwing fits?

① _____ 5 _____ ⑩

What is the most frustrating thing(s) your kids do when they don’t get what they want?

At what age did they/will they ...

Below are some big milestones in the life of your child. At what age did they hit each milestone, or at what age will you let them?

First Cell Phone? _____

Begin Dating? _____

Social Media Accounts? _____

Large Financial Purchase? _____