



Rules, Responsibilities and Routines

All children need big doses of love and acceptance, combined with clearly defined limits. Rules, responsibilities and routines at home help provide that structure.

Keep rules simple and few

Having a few simple rules means everyone knows where they stand. Involve children in deciding the rules; they are more likely to follow them if they helped create them. Keep rules to the things that really matter, since every rule needs a consequence you are prepared to follow through on.

Framing rules positively, “use kind hands” rather than “no hitting,” tends to work better. Some families like to write the rules up and have everyone sign them, adults included.

Our golden rules at school are Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Your Best – often sharing this language can be supportive.

Build in responsibilities

Even young children can take on small jobs at home: putting dirty washing in the basket, tidying toys, helping set or clear the table. Starting early builds good habits and a sense of teamwork; it is much harder to introduce this with an older child who has never had responsibilities before. It does not have to be perfect, just done.

Review routines regularly

Good routines make mornings and bedtimes run more smoothly. It is worth checking in on them from time to time: is the order still working? Would a visual timetable help? Could a reward chart reinforce a routine that is slipping? Are routines flexible enough to cope when things go wrong?

Rules, responsibilities and routines work best alongside regular quality time and plenty of praise, so children want to cooperate, not just comply.