

CLEARLY STATE YOUR RULES

PARENTING CHALLENGES ★ PAGE 1 OF 2

Many of us have carried scars into adulthood because we were punished for rules we did not know existed. "Go to your room!" our parents yelled. When we asked why, they responded, "Because I said so!"

Rules are designed to protect, teach and create order. It is important that your children understand each rule that you have:

1. What does clean room mean?
2. Does now mean now?
3. Does no mean no?
4. What do you mean when you say, "Respect your elders"?
5. How much do I need to do for you to believe that I helped Mom today?
6. If I say I don't like your decision will I get punished for talking back?
7. Why do I need to treat my sister with respect, she's an idiot?
8. My friends say it ok to steal, what's the big deal? We didn't get caught!
9. You lied to mom the other night, so why are you so upset that I just lied?
10. Why should I make my bed, I am the only one who sleeps in it and I don't care if it is messy?

Children who are taught with understanding rather than anger learn the lesson that is intended:

"Please put your jacket in your room; if someone walked around the corner they could slip and fall with it on the floor."

"It isn't kind to call your sister a name. We have a rule in our home that we are kind to each other."

"I can see you are having a great time. It is almost time for us to go. Play really hard and then run as fast as you can and I will do an "ole!" with the towel. You need to come when I call."

"I want to hear what you have to say and my ears can't listen to that tone of voice. Please change your tone of voice so I can HEAR your message."

"I understand you think it is silly to make your bed. One of our rules of responsibility is to make your bed each day. Your ticket to dinner is that your bed is made."

"You are very angry. We have a rule in our home that we are kind to each other. Name calling is not kind. I want to hear what you have on your mind. Start with the word "I" and tell me how you feel. (I'm angry!) Fine, tell me why without any swear words. What are you angry about? (I am angry that you won't let me stay out later on Saturday night.) Ok, now tell me what you want. (I want to stay out until one o'clock this Saturday night because we are having

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a video party and midnight is too early.) Now, bring it to conclusion--ask me if no is my final answer. (Would you please re-think your no and let me stay out later this one time?)

* Check no must mean no for other information in this area.