



## Appropriate limits are:

- ❖ **Clear**--children know what is expected.
- ❖ **Simple**-- if I do A, then B will happen. Children understand the reasons for rules.
- ❖ **Reasonable**—the child is able to do it. The consequences are reasonable, respectful, and make sense (relate to the deed).
- ❖ **Positive**—the limit teaches the child what he can do not just what he can't.
- ❖ **Necessary**—is this limit really needed?

When deciding whether to comply with a limit, children may ask themselves if we really mean it or if they will get caught. Children ignore limits when we are not consistent in enforcing them.

## When correcting behavior:

- ❖ **Get at eye level.** We want children to listen, not be defensive or afraid. Sit down or kneel. Maintain eye contact, but don't glare. Touch the child on the shoulder.
- ❖ **Use a quiet and firm voice.** Sometimes when we begin to lose control, we yell or talk too loudly. It's important to send the message that we are in control, we are serious, and this is important. Take a deep breath, talk slower, and lower your pitch.
- ❖ **Tell the child what he did wrong.** Speak simply and clearly. Be short and concise. Avoid saying 'you always' or you never'. Statements that include these accusations attack the child rather than addressing the behavior. The goal is to change the behavior not attack the child.
- ❖ **Ask what the child will do next time.** Children often misbehave because they don't have a plan for what they can do. Encourage the child to speak up and tell you what she will do next time to avoid the problem. Tell the child you expect her to do better next time. Set high expectations, but show your belief that she can do it. Take advantage of these teachable moments.
- ❖ **Find time for hugs.** Children need to know they are loved even when they misbehave. A hug tells children they are valued, even when they misbehave.

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