



Establishing Family Rules Activity

Think about what our country would be like if we did not have traffic laws, or any laws about littering, stealing, and children going to school, or destroying another person's property. Without laws, our country would not be a safe and enjoyable place to live. Laws, also called rules or limits, are established in families to help them function smoothly and to help members be happier. Imagine what might happen if there were no rules about curfew, chores, respecting one another, what time to go to bed, what TV programs were appropriate or inappropriate, or when to complete homework. Furthermore, think about what would most likely happen if family rules and limits were not enforced with consequences for broken rules. A family would likely be disorganized and family members may not be treated the way they would like. The purpose of this activity is to help your family maintain order and respect for one another by establishing family rules and consequences that will be enforced when rules are broken.

Time: 30-50 minutes

Materials: Paper and Pencil

Implementation:

During a family meeting, talk about rules that are needed for order in your family. This is an excellent time to make sure that every family member clearly understands the family rules. You can also set rules that will help your family function more smoothly. During this meeting, work together in order to establish consequences that will be used when family rules are broken.

As you do this activity, there will probably be some disagreements regarding family rules and associated consequences. Research shows that families who involve children in setting rules and consequences do better than families who do not, so it is important that each member of the family be able to contribute. Children are more likely to feel that rules and consequences are fair and reasonable if they participate in establishing these guidelines.

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Discussion Questions:

- Were you able to involve each member of the family when establishing family rules?
- What family rules are important to your family?
- Do the rules seem to be fair and appropriate to each member of the family? If not, what can you do to arrive at some agreement?
- In what ways will your family benefit from establishing clear rules?
- Why do you think it is important to be flexible and change the family rules over time?
- If the rules you established are not appropriate later on, how will you change these rules?

Activity from: Strengthening Family Ties "A Workbook of Activities Designed to Strengthen Family Relationships"