



6. Family organisation

Having order and predictability in the family makes it easier to manage your child's behaviour. If your child knows what happens, when it happens and what is expected of him or her, your child will know what to do. It will be easier for your child to do what you want.

Rules. Family rules are an important way of regulating behaviour and bringing order to family life. You need to decide what the family rules are, and to make sure that all family members are operating by the same set of rules. The most important thing in two-parent families is for both parents to agree about the rules and to back each other in enforcing them. Spend some time together working out how you want your children to act, what problems may arise with the children's behaviour, and how you will handle them.

Write the rules on a poster on the fridge. (If your children are too young to read, draw pictures or cut out pictures from magazines.)

Family rules should be short, simple, direct and not too many ([See Tip 12- Changing problem behaviour – Give effective instructions](#)). A few basic rules work, because you can supervise them. A lot of complex ones don't work, because they are too hard to keep track of. Some sample rules:

- ☺ In this family we are kind and help each other.
- ☺ We can disagree with each other and still keep our hands to ourselves.
- ☺ We say "Please" and "Thank you".
- ☺ Everyone has a job to do.

Routines. Routines are special kinds of *Rules*. They are household 'standing orders' that help everyone get through the day, e.g.:

- ☺ washing hands before meals
- ☺ packing toys away after use
- ☺ bedtime routines to calm down after playing and get ready for bed.

Routines help children organise themselves. They add structure and predictability to children's lives. The more children know where they stand, the more secure they feel and the less they have to worry about. This is especially important for children if security and trust are a big issue.

It also reduces the number of things you have to worry about. As children get into a daily routine, so you are freed from having to supervise every little thing that happens.