

# Rules

## What are Rules?

A rule is a prescribed guide for conduct or action.<sup>1</sup>

## Why are Rules Important?

- When used appropriately, rules provide a sense of predictability and consistency for children, thereby promoting physical and emotional safety.
- Rules help guide actions toward desired results.



<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster. "Dictionary Definition of Rule." Accessed Sept. 4, 2015. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resilience>



## What Can Be Done?

- Prioritize and establish a few rules that are the most important. It is best to have only three or four rules. More than that can overwhelm children, setting them up for failure.
- Involve family members in setting rules. This helps obtain buy-in, increasing the likelihood of success.
- Make sure the rules are clear, and that they address what they are intended to address. If they do not, brainstorm together how they can be clarified or changed.
- Make sure children understand exceptions to the rules (such as if safety needs to come first).
- Make the rules positive and action-oriented. Save “don’t” for specific safety situations. For example, “Treat each other with respect,” rather than, “Don’t fight, don’t hit, don’t push”.
- Rules should grow with the child. Change them as needed to meet the needs of the child and the current situation.
- Be consistent.
- Focus on success...create rules to help children succeed.

