

Family Boundaries and Discipline

A Discussion Guide for Parents and Kids



5 Discussion Points and Tips for Talking

It can seem like most of the “talking” about boundaries you do is battling with your children over household rules. But it’s possible to have calm, insightful conversations about your family’s boundaries.

Discussion Points

1. “How does our family compare to others in regard to discipline?” This discussion can help you explain your values inform your rules.
2. “Is our family too lenient, too harsh, or just right in enforcing boundaries? Why?” By asking for your child’s opinion, you can begin a discussion that will offer insight into what he thinks about your family’s rules.
3. “What important lessons have you learned after breaking a rule?” This is a good time to talk about the boundaries you had when you were young, and the lessons you learned after violating one.
4. “Which values do you think our family’s boundaries express?” Help your child understand the reasons behind the boundaries you’ve set.
5. Talk about which of your child’s friends has a lot of rules, or very few rules. What does your child think about these differences?

Take It Further

ParentFurther discussion guides are created to help you talk with your kids about tough topics. Visit www.ParentFurther.com for more discussion guides and additional resources.

Tips for Talking

- **Expect more conflict over boundaries as kids go through transition stages, such as beginning to walk, first going to school, entering puberty, or becoming more independent during the high-school years.**
- **Be consistent with the boundaries you set and what you do when they’re violated. Kids are quick to pick up on rules that you don’t enforce.**
- **Kids are more likely to follow rules if the rules make sense to them. For example, say, “We don’t hit other people because it hurts them and we are kind to each other.” Or, “We don’t want you to smoke because smoking is bad for your health and expensive.”**

Your child may not always be open to calmly discussing your family’s boundaries, but it’s very beneficial to talk about what’s working and what’s not.