

How to Set Limits Without Losing Your Mind: Behavior Strategies That Make life Easier

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WHY?!?



Many Reasons

- Poor processing skills
- Poor problem solving skills
- Lack of (quality) sleep
- Overwhelmed/Anxious/Stressed
- Poor communication (understanding and speaking)
- Illness/Pain/Physical issues
- Lack of motivation
- Bad mood
- Testing to see what will happen
- More...



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Biggest Mistakes Parents Make

- Become emotional
- Take things personally
- Inconsistent expectations
- Inconsistent response to behaviors
- Ineffective communication



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Rule #1 – Stay Calm

- If you are not emotionally and behaviorally regulated, then your child won't be either
- Keep a calm (but firm) voice and presence
- Stay in the “here and now”
- Speak and move slowly (give yourself time to think)



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Rule #2 – Communicate Clearly

- Make statements – don't ask questions
- Say what you need to say and nothing more
 - Don't lecture
 - Don't try to rationalize
- Don't respond to everything that comes out of your child's mouth

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Avoid This



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- Use language your child can understand (processing is even more impaired during stressful situations)
- Use more non-verbal communication



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Rule #3 – **Stop the Action**

- Sometimes the best action to take in the “heat of the moment” is no action at all



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- Find the space between “force” and “free for all”
 - Don’t let the child get away
 - Don’t try to force the child to do something
 - Maintain a close physical zone of connection if needed
 - Stay there until calm, and then move on

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Rule #4 – Be Consistent

- Inconsistency makes things much more difficult!
- If you say something is going to happen, then follow through (but know when to fold)
- Figure out what is going to work for you in terms of expectations and consequences, and then stick with it

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Rule #5 – Focus on the Positive



- Find opportunities to praise your child on a regular basis
- Positive reinforcement generally works best (once X is done, then Y will happen)

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- Remind yourself about the good things your child does
- Make time to have fun together and enjoy each other



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