

FAMILY CHECKUP

POSITIVE PARENTING
PREVENTS DRUG ABUSE

Setting Limits

Setting Limits helps parents teach self-control and responsibility, show caring, and provide safe boundaries. It also provides youth with guidelines and teaches them the importance of following rules. This is a two-step process:

Step 1: Setting Rules

- Make clear simple, specific rules.
- Make sure your child understands your rules.
- Have a list of consequences.
- Be ready to follow through.

Step 2: Following Up

Research shows that parents are most effective in setting limits when they follow up right away. Youth are more likely to follow rules if they know you are checking up on them and will enforce the consequences consistently.

- Give a consequence when rules are broken.
- Offer encouragement when rules are followed.

Testing limits is a natural part of growing up, but it presents a special challenge for parents. Often our first reactions may come from fear for our child's safety, or anger at being disobeyed. The **SANE** guidelines can help parents establish appropriate consequences when youth break rules.

S Small consequences are better

A Avoid consequences that punish you

N Nonabusive responses

E Effective consequences (are under your control and non-rewarding to your child)

Youth may get angry, act out, or become isolated when parents enforce consequences. Your child is testing you and your limits. Don't react. Be consistent with your rules.

Extra Tips

- State the limit and the consequence clearly.
- Catch the problem early.
- Avoid arguments and threats.
- Remember to use a firm and calm tone of voice.
- Follow through each time a limit is stretched or a rule is broken.
- Offer encouragement each time a rule is followed.