

Raising Great Kids



FEBRUARY

Setting Limits

When you set limits for your children, you show your love and concern for them. Setting limits tells your child, *"I care about you and want you to be safe. I want you to become responsible and be able to get along with other people."* Limits are like handrails of a staircase or guardrails on a bridge ~ they provide protection and a sense of security.

Setting limits is important as they help your child know what you expect of him, and what you will and will not allow. Be careful that you do not overwhelm your preschooler with stiff controls. Think of the following when you are setting limits for your child. What kind of limits? Limits you select should be necessary. They should:



Protect children from physical harm ~ keeping them away from a hot stove.

Protect property ~ show them how to use the TV properly.

Protect children and others from psychological harm ~ teach them how to put their feelings into appropriate words.

★ **Set limits for those rules that are most important.** Before you decide on a limit ask yourself, *"Is this rule really important?"* Choose your battles carefully and focus on those things that reflect your values. You may want to address things like destroying someone else's toy, swearing or cursing, and stealing. Focus on rules you believe are important.

★ **Set reasonable limits.** Your child should be able to do what you expect of him. It is not reasonable to tell a young child that he should not get angry, or that he should not wet the bed at night. Young children want to please their parents, so if they are told to do what they can't, they may think something is wrong with them. Set limits that will allow children to succeed, not fail.

★ **Be clear and positive!** Say your limits clearly and simply, in a way the child can understand. Tell him exactly what you expect of him and when, e.g., *"Put your shoes in this corner when you come in from outside."* It also helps if you tell the child what to do instead of what not to do. Instead of saying, *"Don't play in the street,"* you could say, *"Play in the yard, not in the street."*

★ **Be consistent.** Children are more likely to respect the limits you set when they realize you mean what you say. If you tell your child to play in your yard, not the neighbor's yard, you must be clear that this is true every time he plays outside. If a child is allowed to do one thing one day, then punished for it the next day, he will not learn what is expected of him. **Z**

Safety Scoop

Heatstroke can result when a child overexerts himself in very hot weather and becomes dehydrated. Some things you can do to prevent this are:

- ☀ Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids before feeling thirsty (water, juice).
- ☀ Keep child dressed in limited amount of loose-fitting, light-colored clothing.
- ☀ **NEVER LEAVE A CHILD IN THE CAR, EVEN FOR A FEW MINUTES. Z**

Did You Know?

Did you know that you can help your child to grow up to be responsible?

Childhood is the time when good habits are formed and responsibility is learned. Responsibility means several things such as taking care of personal items or property. Young children can do this by putting away their own toys and clothes. They can help clear the dishes from the table, or put their own dishes in the kitchen sink. Of course, you will need to work with them to keep the task in small pieces, or they will become frustrated.

Another way young children learn responsibility is by helping with household chores. They can hand you the soap to wash the dishes, empty small wastebaskets, and hold the dust pan while you sweep the floor.

Children learn responsibility by making choices. They can make simple decisions, such as which of two cereals they would like, which of two shirts to wear, which story to read at bedtime. Let them know that the choice is theirs and you'll stick by it.

By giving a child responsibility suitable for his development, you help him learn, "I can do it." This is responsibility!**Z**



Taco Crunch Snack

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 4 cups cheese goldfish crackers
- 4 cups popped popcorn
- 2 cups pretzel sticks
- 1-2 tablespoons taco seasoning mix

Mix goldfish, popcorn and pretzels in a large bowl. Drizzle with part of the oil and toss. Repeat with the rest of the oil. Slowly sprinkle with taco seasoning mix, a little bit at a time, taste as you go. Season to taste.**Z**

Kids Can Help

Children can bring the ingredients and mix ingredients in bowl.

All children must be supervised when they are in the kitchen.



The other day my 3-year-old hit his bigger sister. When I told him to apologize to her, he refused and ran out of the room. I took him aside for a time out, and then he gave his sister a hug and kiss. Is apologizing difficult for preschoolers?

"I'm sorry" are the toughest words your preschooler may ever learn to say. Why? Because apologizing does not come naturally to them. It is something that they have to learn. They are still just figuring out how to take turns and play cooperatively. Not many children at this age are able to imagine how someone else feels. Other reasons young children find it hard to apologize are, they want to avoid blame, and a child's pride makes it hard. How can you help?

- ★ Teach your child how it's done. Sometimes it's okay to apologize for your child, and remember to apologize to your child when you need to.
- ★ Remind your child of the rules. Tell him why an apology is necessary ~ which rule was broken.
- ★ Suggest a loving action that can go with the apology, e.g., giving a hug, holding hands.
- ★ Point out good behavior. Let your child know how delighted you are when he apologizes on his own.
- ★ Role play with toys or teddy bears. You might say, "Your big teddy bear knocked over the little teddy bear. What does he say?"

It's not easy to teach young children to apologize, however, you should.**Z**

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