WORKING TOGETHER WITH FAMILY RULES

Why have family rules?
Individuals are part of a family system, and each person has to cooperate if the system is going to function properly. Rules help families meet their goals; they also make working together easier.

What do we need?
pen or pencil; a whistle or bell; a copy of Working Together: Family Rules (pages 105-106) for each family member, or family members can share this book and pass it around.

How long will it take?
30 to 45 minutes

What do we do?
- Choose one family member to lead the activity. Then agree on a time when the family can meet together.
- The leader explains, “Rules help life run more smoothly, and they help us meet our goals. Let’s pretend we don’t have a rule that says only one person can talk at a time. What would happen if we all talked at the same time?”
- Have everyone talk at the same time for about 30 seconds. End the experiment with a whistle or bell and regain control of the group. Ask each person what they heard while everyone was talking.
- The leader continues, “One of our goals for this project is to learn something about how to resolve conflict. What would happen to this goal if everybody always talked at the same time?”
- Have members take turns reading a section of Working Together: Family Rules, and ask for responses from family members about your family rules. For each of the topics listed, check whether there is a family rule. If there is a rule, write it in
and decide why the rule is needed.

Option. Discuss the following question.
How do these rules help us work together as a family?
Now find a part of your family life in which a rule has not been made. Discuss these questions:
Is anything going on in the family that might be dangerous or unfair or unpleasant? What rule would help us deal with that?

Have the family choose a goal to work toward (like cleaning the garage) or an activity they'd like to do this week (like planning a fun trip or preparing a special meal). As you work on this project together, be sure to review and follow any family rules that apply to this activity. For example, "Children must get help to use the oven."

During the next week, complete the activity or meet the goal you've set for yourselves. At your next family meeting, discuss these questions:
• How is this way of working toward a goal different from what you have done in the past?
• How did following family rules help you meet your goal?
• What did you like about doing things this way?

Working Together: Family Rules

This worksheet will help you talk about your family’s rules. For each subject listed, decide whether there is a family rule. If there is a rule, write it down and circle the reason you believe the rule is needed.

1. Cooking
   No rule
   Rule. It is: __________________________
   This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
   It helps us learn. It makes things fair.

2. What or when to eat
   No rule
   Rule. It is: __________________________
   This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
   It helps us learn. It makes things fair.

3. Leaving the house
   No rule
   Rule. It is: __________________________
   This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
   It helps us learn. It makes things fair.

4. Having friends in the house
   No rule
   Rule. It is: __________________________
   This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
   It helps us learn. It makes things fair.

5. Using the phone
   No rule
   Rule. It is: __________________________
   This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
   It helps us learn. It makes things fair.

6. Doing chores
   No rule
   Rule. It is: __________________________
   This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
   It helps us learn. It makes things fair.
7. Watching TV
   No rule
   Rule. It is:
   This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
   It helps us learn. It makes things fair.

8. Getting along with brothers and sisters
   No rule
   Rule. It is:
   This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
   It helps us learn. It makes things fair.

9. Answering the door and phone when parents are out
   No rule
   Rule. It is:
   This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
   It helps us learn. It makes things fair.

10. Taking care of clothes
    No rule
    Rule. It is:
    This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
    It helps us learn. It makes things fair.

11. Other rules
    No rule
    Rule. It is:
    This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
    It helps us learn. It makes things fair.

12. Other rules
    No rule
    Rule. It is:
    This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
    It helps us learn. It makes things fair.

13. Other rules
    No rule
    Rule. It is:
    This rule is needed because: It keeps us safe and healthy. It makes life pleasant.
    It helps us learn. It makes things fair.
What happened?

▼ What happened when you discussed your family's rules?
▼ Who makes the rules in your family? How do you feel about that?

What did you learn?

▼ Why is it necessary to have rules?
▼ What are the important rules in your family?
▼ How do you know if it's time to change a rule?
▼ How do you decide to change a rule in your family?

Why was this activity important?

▼ What happens when rules are not followed in your home?
▼ What happens when everybody follows the rules?

What's next?

▼ What are some rules that even adults have to follow?
▼ What happens to adults who break those rules?