

Setting Limits for Children ages 36 months to age 6

Family Rituals and Routines:

- Try to imagine living through a day without being able to tell time and not knowing from one minute to the next what's going to happen.
- Living without rules and structure creates a lot of tension and anxiety. This may lead to temper tantrums when one activity is interrupted or ended because of another expectation. This is how your child feels if he or she is living in an environment in which rules and structure are not taught and enforced.
- Create a simple schedule to help you and your child navigate throughout the day. Structure promotes peace and eliminates chaos. Consider establishing routines for the following activities: waking up, getting ready for school, meal times, playing, rest time, bathing and sleeping.

Examples of routines:

- Morning time: A fixed wake up time is important in establishing a child's biological clock. Establishing a clearly defined morning routine should be simple: wake up, wash, dress, eat, prepare lunch and snack and go. Precious morning minutes can be saved by picking out school clothes the night before and packing lunches and snacks in the evening as well.
- Before dinner time: The time you are preparing dinner can be especially tough on preschoolers. They may be tired and hungry or they may want individual attention from you. Establish a routine quiet activity for this time of day (coloring, reading books, watching a favorite show). Whatever it is, do this every day so your child knows that this is what will happen while mom or dad are preparing dinner.