

Discipline

Loving Your Child Means You Should Establish Limits

You'd never let a toddler play with fire. You'd never let your child jump off a bridge. But when it comes to setting other kinds of limits, some parents just give in.

Sometimes they are trying to protect their children from failure. And sometimes they're just tired and want to avoid an argument.

But setting limits is one of your most important jobs. Observing limits will help your child develop the discipline needed to follow directions and concentrate in school. As a result, she'll be more likely to do well and be a successful student.

Here are some tips:

- Start with a behavior that matters to you. Limits are no good if they aren't enforced. If seeing clothes on the floor really drives you crazy, then that's a place to start.
- Talk with your child about the limits. Tell your child why it's important to you. Start by asking for help rather than giving the impression that you're laying down the law.
- Work with your child to set up consequences. "If you don't pick up your clothes, then I won't wash them when I do laundry."
- Stick to the rules. Once you've set limits, you have to enforce them every time. Otherwise, your child will learn that you don't mean what you say.

Source: Dan Kindlon, "Loving Ways to Set Limits," Parent Soup Parenting Lessons, http://www.parentsoup.com/lessons/character/articles/0,,272900_295094,00.html.

(Reprinted with permission from the October 2003 issue of *Parents make the difference!*® (Elementary School Edition) newsletter. Copyright © 2003 The Parent Institute, a division of NIS, Inc.)