

Steps for Making Family Rules

- 1** **Get everyone to join in**
Suggest that as you all live under one roof, you need to agree rules for everyone. If a child won't join in you can point out that they will miss the chance to have their say, and that rules will be agreed that will apply to them too.
- 2** **Talk about how you want to feel in the family**
Encourage everyone to share their ideas
- 3** **Share problem behaviour**
Ask everyone to talk freely – without fault-finding and blaming – about issues the family could improve.
- 4** **Share ideas for rules**
Identify issues you would all like to have as rules in your family. For every behaviour you do not want, think of a behaviour you would like instead. Fill in the practice sheet "Our Family Rules" as you go along, and then produce your own colourful version.
- 5** **Keep the rules simple and specific**
Rules need to be clear, easy to understand, and realistic. Avoid rules such as "Do be good – Don't be naughty" or "Do be happy – Don't be sad/angry".
- 6** **Decide on a reward and a penalty for each rule**
For family rules such as "Do talk nicely to each other – Don't shout", children will accept the rule more readily if parents respect it too, and agree to a suitable reward and penalty for themselves. Let children as well as adults suggest rewards and penalties.
- 7** **Limit family rules**
A maximum of four or five rules is plenty. Keeping the list short will help everyone remember the rules and practise them.
- 8** **Drop and add new rules when needed**
Rules are not cast in concrete. When something is no longer a problem, have a rule-dropping party!