

# Supernanny's Top Ten Rules

1. **Praise and Rewards:** Praise, attention and love are the best rewards. Sweets, treats and toys are not necessary as rewards. But do treat your child to a special present and card when a new brother or sister comes along. It will really help him feel involved.
2. **Consistency:** Once you have made a rule, don't change it for the sake of a quiet life or because you're embarrassed. Make sure that everyone-which includes caregivers and your partner-keeps to the same rules as well. A rule is a rule is a rule.
3. **Routine:** Keep your home in basic order and maintain a routine. Set times for waking, meals, bath and bed are the cornerstones of family life. Once a routine is in place, you can be flexible. Arrange your routine so that every child has one-on-one attention from each parent every day. Make these "special" times. Work out a rotation so that parents also share chores.
4. **Boundaries:** Children need to know there are limits to their behavior, which means what is acceptable and what is not. You need to set rules and tell them what to expect. Children must learn to respect the fact that you need quality time for yourself and as a couple. Clear rules about behavior help to prevent excessive sibling rivalry.
5. **Discipline:** Defend boundaries with discipline. This means firm and fair control. Discipline does not mean punishment. Back up your rules with discipline if necessary.
6. **Warnings:** There are two kinds of warnings. One tells a child what's coming next; you're the speaking clock telling her that bath time is coming. The other is a warning for bad behavior. That gives him the chance to correct his behavior without any further discipline.
7. **Explanations:** A small child can't understand how you want him to behave unless you tell him. Show and tell to get the message across. Don't reason or make it too complicated-just state the obvious. When you are disciplining a child, explain why in a way that is appropriate for his age. Ask him if he understands the reason why he has been disciplined so the message hits home.
8. **Restraint:** Keep your cool. You are the parent and you are in charge. Don't answer a tantrum by a display of anger or respond to shouting by shouting back. Let children sort some things out for themselves, providing they are at no risk of hurting themselves or each other.
9. **Responsibility:** Allow children to do small, achievable things to boost their self-confidence and learn the necessary life and social skills. But, make sure your expectations are reasonable.
10. **Relaxation:** Quality time is important for everyone, including yourself. Let your child unwind at bedtime with a story and cuddles. Make sure you, your partner and your other kids have quality time for individual attention.

# Supernanny's Naughty Step Techniques

This technique can break the cycle of bad behavior very quickly. But remember that you and your partner have to be consistent and don't leave out a stage. The Warnings and the Explanations are essential. If in the heat of the moment you go straight to C and bypassing A and B, the method won't work.

- A. **The Warning:** Go to your child, come down to his level and look him straight in the eye. Use the voice of authority (low, firm tone and confident body language) to give him a verbal warning. Say, "that behavior is unacceptable. We don't push people or throw things at them. It's wrong. Please don't do it again." The warning is a key stage in the technique. It gives your child the chance to correct his own behavior. If you leave out the warning, you've given him nowhere to go.
- B. **The Ultimatum:** Five minutes later, your child does the same thing again. This time, using the same low, firm tone and confident body language, you issue an ultimatum. Say, "I told you not to push your sister or throw things at her. That was very naughty. We don't push people. The next time you do it, you're going to the Naughty Step."
- C. **The Naughty Step:** As soon as the bad behavior is repeated, take your child straight to the step. Sit him down and tell him to stay there. How long you should make him stay there will depend on his age. A couple of minutes is long enough for a two-and-a-half-year-old. Five minutes is about right for four-year-olds and over.
- D. **The Explanation:** Like the Warning, this is another key stage. Before you leave your child, explain why he's been put on the step. Say, "We don't push people or throw things at them. It's unacceptable behavior. People will get hurt. You're going to sit here for five minutes and think about what you've done. When five minutes is over, I will come and get you and I want you to apologize, please. Now stay there. "
- E. **The Apology:** If he bounces off the step a few seconds later, march him back there and repeat the Explanation. Don't leave him for any longer than five minutes. At the end of that time, tell him you want him to apologize. But if he reappears before the five minutes is up and is genuinely sorry, let him stay. He must say what he's apologizing for. "Sorry" is a step in the right direction, but "Sorry for pushing my sister" is much better. People often ask me how you can tell whether an apology is genuine or not. I always say it's not the word, it's the manner in which it is delivered. I think it's fair to say that if a child has shouted "SORRY!" at the top of his lungs, it's not genuine.
- F. **Praise:** When he's apologized, praise him for it. This is important. You need to show your child that you have forgiven him for his bad behavior. "Thank you. That's more like it." Go back to your normal voice. He'll hear the difference in the higher tone.

- A. It's over: As soon as the child has apologized and you've praised him, treat the incident as closed. Invite him to play or to join in with whatever he was doing before. He's had the discipline, it's over, and now he must know he has a chance to make a fresh start.

### One Strike & You're Out Technique

The naughty Step Technique generally works wonders. In some cases, however, particularly if the child is older or the bad behavior is more ingrained, you may need to try something else.

There is no verbal warning with this technique. When the child behaves badly, remove her from the room. You don't have to take her to a special place, just exclude her from your presence. Tell her that her behavior is unacceptable and she can come back when she is ready to behave nicely and apologize.

If she comes back into the room to challenge you – and she will – remove her again. Don't pay her any attention. Say, "I'm

not interested." Avoid eye contact.

Use voice control. Say, "Please leave the room" in a low, authoritative voice, so you don't have to physically remove her each time.

Keep it up until she says she is sorry. This will happen sooner than you think. Removing attention completely from a child who is used to getting it for bad behavior always comes as a complete shock.

When she has apologized, praise her and ask her to join in and play.

## Involvement Technique

Getting your child involved with what you are doing. This allows you to keep paying attention to your child by talking about whatever you're doing at the time. It is also important to praise your child and thank them for their efforts. Small children love to help. Helping makes them feel responsible and gives them confidence.

## Time Out for older children

Older children will outgrow the Naughty Step, so try to cultivate in them a sense of responsibility for their actions by creating a 'reflection room' or 'chill-out zone'. They can be asked to go there when they're angry to give them time and physical space to think things over.

If behavior is really out of control, if the Naughty Step has become more of an attention-seeking ploy, or if older children do something they really shouldn't have done, try the [One-Strike-and-You're-Out](#) Technique or think about some kind of toy confiscation punishment. Once disciplined, however, it is especially important to find out why your child behaved in a way which was out of character, as understanding their actions will help you to prevent it occurring

again. For older children, a Video Diary might be useful in opening these lines of communication.

### **Don't forget the reward!**

Troubleshooting behavioral issues using the Naughty Step works best when you also make a fuss of what your child does right. Parent positively, and use a Reward Chart to reinforce spontaneous and continual good behavior in your child.

### **One Strike And You're Out**

You can expect more from older children in terms of knowing what behavior is acceptable and what isn't. Sitting down to run through what you expect of them with your older children can't be a bad thing, or if there's a recurrent discipline problem, try putting some [House Rules](#) in place.

Of course, kids are kids and at some point they're sure to test the boundaries. The One-Strike-and-You're-Out Technique could help you discipline children who've outgrown the [Naughty Chair](#), but who sometimes need to be reminded of the consequences of their behavior.

### **Disciplining older children**

Make sure that you and your child are both aware of what has happened and be clear on why her behavior is unacceptable.

- Don't give a warning. Remove your child from the room and tell her in an authoritative voice that her behavior is unacceptable and that she can only come back into the room once she has apologized.
- If she comes back into the room without apologizing, don't enter into a discussion; remove her from the room again and repeat that she can come back once she's ready to apologize.
- Repeat this step on any subsequent attempts to re-enter the room.
- Once your child has apologized, praise her, give her a hug and let her join in the activity again.

Before you both return to the room, it's worth trying to find out why the bad behavior occurred, or whether there's something particularly worrying her. This might be difficult to answer, especially after you've just given her a telling off, so make a mental note that either you or your partner should try to talk through the incident with her at a later date.