

# FIVE C's OF EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE

## 1. CLARITY

**Be clear in stating rights, rules, and limits.**

- ◆ Children need to know what the rules are, what the discipline will be for breaking a rule, and what that discipline is intended to achieve.
- ◆ Make the following rule unmistakable: ***Use of alcohol, tobacco, or any other drug by children will not be tolerated.***
- ◆ Be direct and honest in establishing rights, rules, and limits. Never be secretive or try to manipulate. If your child is confused about a rule (“*But you smoke?*”), answer questions as honestly as you can.
- ◆ Some families find it helpful to write down the rules about homework, television viewing, curfews, friends, spending money, and responsibilities.

## 2. CONSISTENCY

**Be consistent in rules, discipline, and reward, but also be flexible to encourage growth.**

- ◆ There are times when an exception can be made to a curfew or some other rule. Whenever possible, make this exception beforehand. This helps develop the child’s sense of responsibility.
- ◆ Avoid adding new disciplines that were not discussed before the rule was broken.

## 3. COMMUNICATION

**Talk often about rights, rules, limits, and the reasons for them.**

- ◆ Help your child learn to talk openly and honestly about feelings and needs—including the need for help.
- ◆ Talk about expanding rights and changing limits as your child grows. This shows respect for the child’s need to explore, take risks, and become more independent.
- ◆ Be willing to discuss the fairness of any rule.

## 4. CARING

**Show affection and love often without being overly protective. Children who have close, affectionate ties with their parents are most likely to obey family rules. This is more important than how strict or permissive you are.**

- ◆ Criticize the action, not the child. Instead of saying, “*How could you be so stupid?*” say, “*Do you know why that was dangerous?*”
- ◆ When rules are broken, act calmly to carry out the discipline your child expects.
- ◆ Show respect for your child’s rights, such as the right to privacy.

## 5. CREATE

**Create a sense of social responsibility. Give your child regular duties to help him develop self-discipline and a sense of accomplishment.**

- ◆ Hold your child accountable for his actions.
- ◆ Help your child develop a sense of self-respect so that he thinks about how an action will make him feel about himself.