

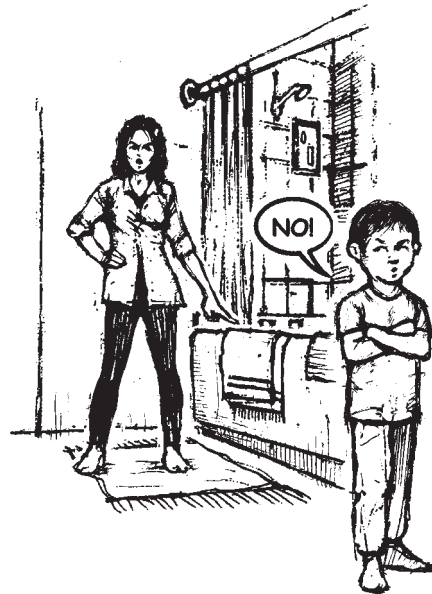
Where's the limit?

Children might also push at the boundaries we have set just to find out how firm the limits are, or because they want to be allowed to do what their friends do. It's important not to let boundaries be dropped *just* because our children want it that way, or because 'Everyone else is allowed to...' As the parent, it is up to you to decide which boundaries to set.

Boundaries can be flexible. We may not mind our children swearing at home, but we might insist that they keep their language clean elsewhere. We may have rules about when our children are allowed sweets; perhaps only after meals, or only at the weekend.

Too many boundaries

Although having firm boundaries is good for children it is possible to go overboard with them. Too many boundaries, or ones that are not needed any longer, can stifle children. Children need plenty of freedom *within* certain limits, to develop, to express themselves and to find out for themselves what feels right.



A GRANDMOTHER:

I was brought up very strictly. I realise now that nearly all of the battles I used to have with my own children were because I'd made too many rules. It was the only way I knew at the time, but I wish I'd known then what I know now. I'm glad my son has learnt the lesson and only has rules for his children that are really necessary.

When children have too many boundaries, their world can seem very negative. They are likely to have clashes with their parents and be very rebellious. The job for us is to find the balance between too many and too few boundaries.