

Patient Information

Tops Tips for Setting Ground Rules

Setting clear ground rules can help children have a healthier lifestyle. Examples of ground rules could include:

- Asking before taking food from the cupboards/fridge.
- Agreeing a set amount of time on the playstation/computer.
- Not eating in the bedroom.
- Taking the TV out of the bedroom.

In the long run ground rules will help your child feel happy and secure as they will know you care for them and have their best interests at heart. In the short term though it can be challenging to put new ground rules in place. Consider the following:

- Although as a parent you decide the ground rules, it's important to talk to your child and explain what the new ground rules will be and how it will help.
- Give your child some choice within the ground rules, for example if the new rule is not driving to school then you could offer them choice over how they get there 'you/we can either walk or cycle to school, which would you prefer?'.
- **BE CONSISTENT** – If the ground rule waivers then your child will know they stand a chance of getting things back to the way they were. This means being prepared to say 'No' even when you're tired and fed up yourself. Make sure spouses / partners / grandparents etc. are also aware of the ground rules and are giving the same message.
- Ground rules should apply to everyone. Make sure everyone follows through on the rules, so it is not just your child that is making changes.
- Be persistent. Children are likely to push the boundaries at first but if you stay firm things will calm down.