



When family rules get broken... WISPAR* to your children (using the 3BEs)!

*based on good practice recommended by Jean Illesly-Clarke, therapist & author

Note for parents:

As you follow these steps, speak calmly and enjoy the feeling of being in control of yourself. This will help your child to find their self-control too. Remember that there is no such thing as a Perfect Parent, but you CAN aim for and achieve being a Good Enough Parent. By WISPAR-ing, you will be managing the situation as well as you can and you need not shout or remain angry for long.

W	<p>WHICH OF THE 3BEs was affected? (BE SAFE, BE OK or BE GROWING & LEARNING) Examples: when you hit your sister, you broke the BE SAFE rule; when you called your brother names, you broke the BE OK rule; when you messed around aimlessly, you broke the BE GROWING & LEARNING rule. Using the 3BEs help you to notice WHEN behaviour has become unacceptable and WHY.</p>
I	<p>IDENTIFY the behaviour that was wrong and explain this to your child. Example: it was wrong to hit your sister and you broke the BE SAFE rule.</p>
SP	<p>Apply an appropriate SANCTION by removing a privilege. Example: if your child was playing a board game, they must now miss a turn. Sitting on a designated Time Out spot (chair, stairs etc); or curtailing your teenager's plan to go out are other examples. For more severe or repeated bad behaviours, you could also apply a PENALTY by adding an extra activity – such as having to do extra help with housework, over what is normally expected.</p>
A	<p>Help your child to make AMENDS. What can he/she do to help make good? <i>This is a very important step that often gets left out.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child needs to say "I'm sorry for (what I did)" to their "victim" and/or give them a hug. This can be a good start but is sometimes not enough on its own. • Young children will need your help to think of something more they could do to make amends. Help the "victim" ask for what they need now, to put things right from their viewpoint. Older children can be encouraged to come up with an idea on their own. Notice that making amends needs to be proportionate, a child-sized contribution to putting things right. They cannot put everything right! • Examples: sharing a toy, letting the "victim" choose the next game, tidying up the mess they created, doing work to raise funds towards replacing a damaged article, lending a favoured item to redress "borrowing without asking". • Making AMENDS needs to relate to the misbehaviour AND have the approval of the person who was directly affected. Help your child to think this through carefully. Help them negotiate with the person who was affected. The best solutions may take a little longer to think up.
R	<p>RESTORE the child to "OK" in the family. Once they have made amends, there is no need to feel resentful or recall the event again. Forgive and move on. When a child breaks a rule, it is their behaviour that was "not OK". They are still OK as a person. <i>Letting them know all is "OK" again now is very important.</i> Praise them for making good choices when they have endured their sanction or penalty and when they have made amends.</p>

Let your child know that you love them for who they are, even when you don't like what they did. WISPAR-ing takes up some time, but is a good investment in your child's future abilities to get along with others. Notice that WISPAR-ing can also help solve conflicts between adults who are willing to handle one another respectfully.