

Clear Rules and Expectations

Video Transcript

Title Screen: Clear Rules and Expectations, The Maryland EXCELS and Maryland State Department of Education logos.

This video is an animated presentation where the content on the slides is represented in the narration.

Narrator: Clear Rules and Expectations serve as the foundation for behavior in your program. Every program is different but there are ways that everyone can make rules and expectations more effective.

Keep rules short, simple, and stated in a positive way. Instead of saying, "No running," try: "We use walking feet inside." This tells children what to do, not just what not to do.

Make sure the rules are developmentally appropriate. That means adjusting expectations based on a child's age and development and meeting them where they are.

Enforcing rules consistently is essential when helping children understand expectations. If rules change or are not enforced depending on the day, the teacher, or the child, children may get confused and negative behaviors could occur. Make sure rules are followed every day, by every staff member, with every child.

A requirement of levels 4 and 5 is that rules are developed with input from the children when it is appropriate. This can be as simple as asking: "What can we do to help everyone feel safe and happy today?" A child might say, "Don't hit." Help reframe the rule they provide positively. Suggest, "Let's write a rule about hitting. How about "Use our hands to help our friends." When children help create the rules, they're more likely to follow them.

Use visuals to reinforce expectations. Take photographs of children following the rules and post them around the room. Talk about what's happening in the picture and refer to them often in real time.

Think about it.

How do we make rules clear, consistent, and age-appropriate? How do children know what the rules and expectations are? How do we encourage children's input into the rule?

Please take advantage of this time to answer the questions. This will help you build an effective Positive Guidance Policy or strengthen the policy your program already has.