

Establish Clear and Specific Expectations

It's important to establish expectations for your child. But it's just as important to be clear and specific about those expectations. So, instead of telling her to “calm down,” for example, be more specific. Say, “I expect you to speak respectfully to me—even when we disagree.”

Here are some guidelines for setting expectations about:

- **Homework.** Instead of saying: “Get off the couch and do your homework!” be specific: “We agreed that you would start your homework at 6:30. That's in 10 minutes.”
- **Chores.** Instead of saying: “Clean your room!” be specific: “Make your bed and put your dirty clothes in the hamper.”



- **Phone calls.** Instead of saying: “Stop talking on the phone all night!” be specific: “You can talk on the phone up to an hour each night, but there are no calls—in or out—after 9 p.m.”
- Give your child clear boundaries. It's the best way to communicate your expectations.