



The Rules

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Often my adult children, with shocked expressions, ask me "How did you get them to do that?" They are referring to the fact that their children who are "picky eaters" enjoy stew or other foods that they won't eat at home. Sometimes they surprise their parents by doing laundry, baking, or cleaning up their messes when they are staying with me and again, I hear "How did you get them to do that?"

My grandchildren know the rules - and they follow them. I believe that we have wonderful times together, partly because we all know where we stand and what is expected. Perhaps you would like to consider the rules that I have devised over the years and then revise them to suit your situation. Here they are:

1. I'm the boss!
2. No fighting allowed (ever) - consequence is the risk of not being invited again.
3. You MUST have FUN!
4. Everyone helps to do the work (cooking, cleaning etc.). We don't begin any activities until the work is done.
5. No whining! (It doesn't get you what you want and, in fact, it just turns me off!)
6. Desert is provided after EVERY meal but not until the meal is eaten.
7. Technology is limited (do it on your own time at your house). Here we watch old movies, play BOARD games or cards, and go to places that your parents would likely never take you.
8. Bathing suits and beach towels are required (by the way - you wash your own IMMEDIATELY after each swim).
9. Toilets MUST be flushed (EVERY TIME) and lights are to be turned off during the day (we are protecting the world for your grandchildren).
10. Only one pop at a time (we recycle the cans).
11. We eat at the table.
12. You cannot go ANYWHERE in the condo facilities without me - even in the hallway (We follow the rules of the Condo Board as well as those of the country).
13. What I tell you about your parents is true (no matter what they say)
14. Anything you have heard about me from your parents is open for discussion as their perceptions may have been skewed. You need to form your own opinion!
15. During our time together we will talk about politics and history as well as discussing values and the responsibility we each have to make the world a better place.
16. I am allowed to "show you off" to my friends, acquaintances or anyone who crosses our path. (Make sure you don't make me look like a liar because I have told EVERYONE that you are absolutely amazing).
17. I don't keep secrets and expect the same from you.
18. I give hugs, kisses and tell you frequently that you are loved (get used to it).
19. We use manners (I am not into burping contests).
20. Communication: You are welcome to have visits with me whenever you like but all arrangements are made through your parents. (You cannot invite me to your house until you are 18 years of age unless your parents have asked you to do so). Emails and telephone calls, however, are at yours and my initiation. You are responsible to keep the communication going with me without depending on your parents to encourage or nag you.

Finally, remember that rules are only effective if they are enforced. That means you, as the adult, are responsible to keep everyone accountable - including yourself. Oh, and make sure you don't forget Rule #3! That's what builds good memories!