

SIX Rules

to Raise Your Children By

By Julie Baumgardner, MS, CFLE

It seems like now, more than ever before, parents are questioning how to raise their children. They are asking questions like: How do you teach them to respect others and authority? How do you take a strong will and point it in a positive direction? How do you teach them to take responsibility for themselves?

According to internationally known psychologist and award winning author Dr. Kevin Leman, we have arrived at a place in history where American families have become child-centric. American parents are permissive and democratic, and American children have become spoiled, sassy, and out-of-control. If children today want to do something and their parents say no, they often sneak around their backs and do it anyway. The idea of doing chores around the house without being paid is considered by many youngsters to be “unfair” and “beyond the call of duty.” Dr. Leman believes that allowing young people to operate in this manner is not preparing them for the real world, and he outlines six important rules parents today should teach their kids.



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The Six Rules

There are certain realities by which children are going to have to live their adult lives. The sooner we start teaching them what Dr. Leman refers to as the “rules of the road,” the better off our young people will be as they transition into adulthood.

Rule One: You're never going to be the center of everyone's attention—not for long at least.

Rule Two: Everyone must learn to obey a higher authority.

Rule Three: Everyone is expected to be a contributing member of society.

Rule Four: Everyone is responsible for his or her own behavior.

Rule Five: You can't always get what you want and what you do get, you get by working and waiting.

Rule Six: You experience happiness, which is the elixir of success, in direct proportion to how sensitive to and considerate you are of others.

Putting Them in Action

It is one thing to talk about the rules and a whole new ballgame to put them into practice. As you work on your game plan, I think one of the best ways to think about this is to begin with the end in mind. Ask yourself, “What kind of skills do I want my child to have later in life?” Then, teach those skills!

Rule One in Action: Children understand that they are valued family members—but not the be-all and end-all.

Rule Two in Action: Children understand they are expected to obey the rules.

Rule Three in Action: Children understand that they are expected to contribute around the house—without getting paid to do so.

Rule Four in Action: Children understand that they are responsible for their own behavior, and that misbehavior has a consequence.

Rule Five in Action: Children learn self-discipline by not always getting what they want. They learn the difference between needs and wants and the idea that good things come to those who wait.

Rule Six in Action: Children learn that self-centeredness and unhappiness go hand-in-hand.

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Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant: 90FM0048. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.