

“The health, productivity, and creativity of any society are the direct result of how the children of that society were treated.”

—Dr. Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph. D



STRONG FAMILIES BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES

## Healthy Limit Setting

*By Susan Christofferson*

The Nurturing Center's goal is to ensure that each child has the right to be treated with respect and live in safety with secure, healthy, nurturing relationships.

- Set a good example. What kind of limits do you set for yourself? Children learn more from how their parents behave than what they say.
- Make as few rules as possible. Putting limits on your child's behavior is important, but too many rules increase rebellious behavior.
- Be consistent. A few rules that are always enforced are more effective than many rules that are enforced sporadically.
- Praise good behavior and accomplishments. Try to ignore negative behavior unless it is destructive, dangerous or harmful to others.
- Take time to listen to your child, especially if they have a problem to discuss or if they want to talk about a rule that they are having a difficult time following.
- Encourage independence in your children. Let them select their own clothes and dress themselves, for example. Let them learn they can cope without you.
- Let children contribute to making of family rules and decisions. They are less likely to break rules that they have helped to make.
- Make sure children understand the household rules and the penalties for breaking them.
- Act quickly when a child misbehaves. Don't let a behavioral problem drag on endlessly without attention or resolution.
- Avoid continual criticism and nagging. Instead, offer praise and positive suggestions that don't challenge your child's self esteem. Avoid power struggles with them. Discipline is not a game in which there are winners and losers.
- Keep your sense of humor. It can work wonders with your children and help you keep you perspective about what is really important.
- Treat your children as you would your best friend—build your relationships on the foundation of respect, courtesy and love.