

What To Expect When You Begin Setting Limits*

Don't expect your teenager to welcome your limits with open arms. If you've been lax about limit setting or have previously failed to enforce your child's intermittent infractions, or if your child's friends have fewer restrictions, you may find the going a little tough at first. In fact, your teenagers may purposely defy you in an attempt to test your resolve, even if their defiance is just verbal sparring. They may say, "Nobody else has to be home by eleven-thirty!" "Why are you treating me like a baby?" "You're so stupid!" or, "You can't make me." And you need to be ready for these challenges to your authority.

Remind your teenagers that you're not asking anything unreasonable of them, and you intend to enforce your newly imposed limits. You can acknowledge that you've allowed them to get away with too much in the past, and were probably mistaken. But now you're setting limits because you're concerned about their actions and want the best for them. It'll probably be tough for all of you at first, but you'll find that after you've consistently set limits for a few weeks, most teenagers will accept them.

* (Excerpt from: *How to Keep Your Teenager Out of Trouble, and What to Do If You Can't* by Dr. Neil I. Bernstein)