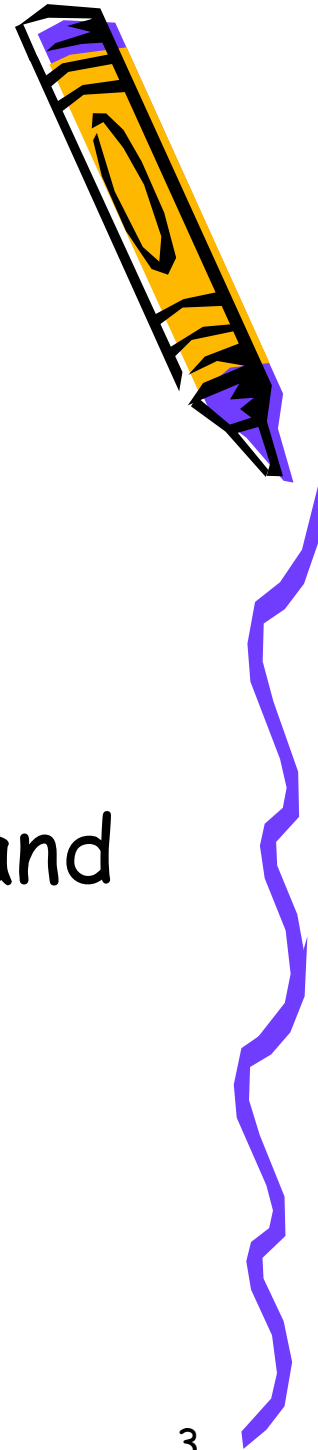# Family Morals, Values, and Rules

Developing Family Morals and Values

- Discipline comes from the Latin word *discipulus*, which means "to teach and guide."

- The basis for teaching children discipline is in identifying a set of family morals and family values.

Family Morals:
Beliefs of Right and Wrong

- Family morals are the beliefs that family members have about right and wrong, and good and bad.

Examples of Family Morals

- Treating others with kindness and respect.
- Not taking things that don't belong to you.
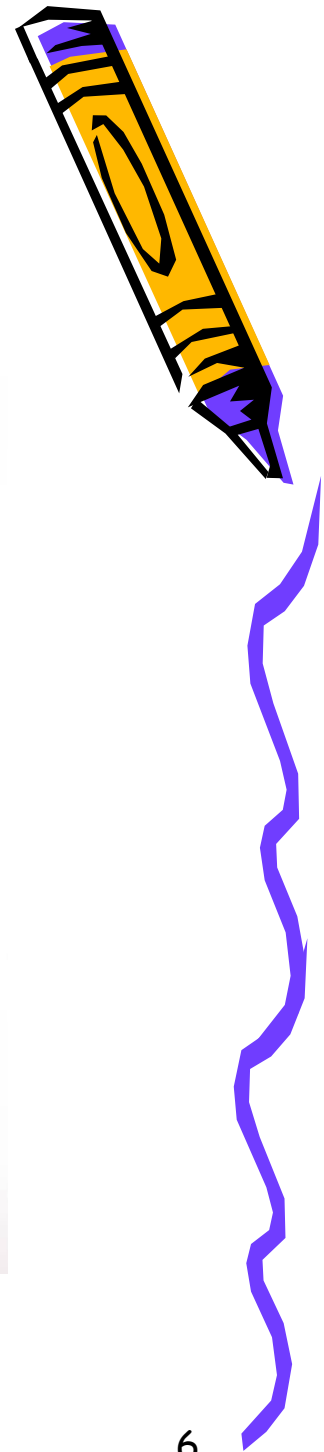- Cooperating with parents by following family rules.

Family Morals

- Without the moral basis of right and wrong, as children get older, they are likely to feel confused about limits, and may not make good decisions.
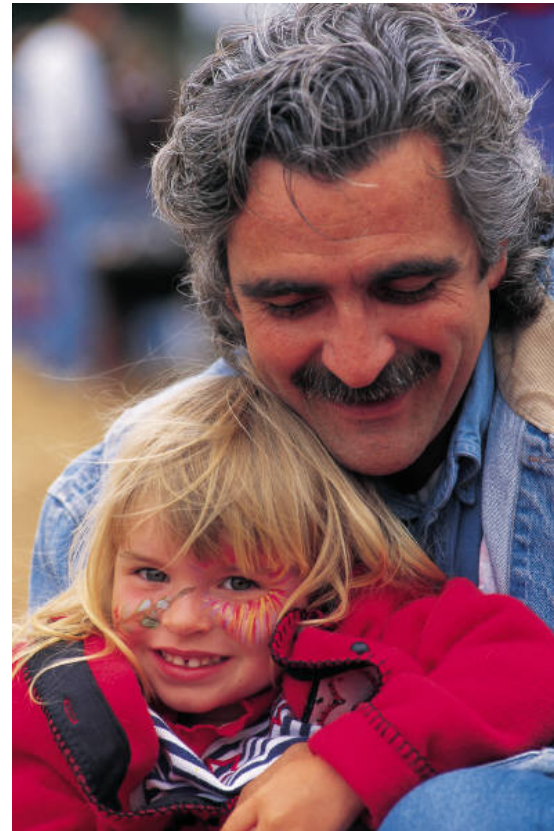
How Morals are Developed

- **Parents**
  - Parents are a child's primary source of moral development.

- **Extended Family**
  - Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other extended family members play a role in the development of morals.

- **Siblings**
  - Older brothers and sisters are a main source of moral development.

- **School**
  - Children spend the first 18 years of life educated by other adults in day care, preschool, and public school.
  - Education strongly influences the development of children's morals.
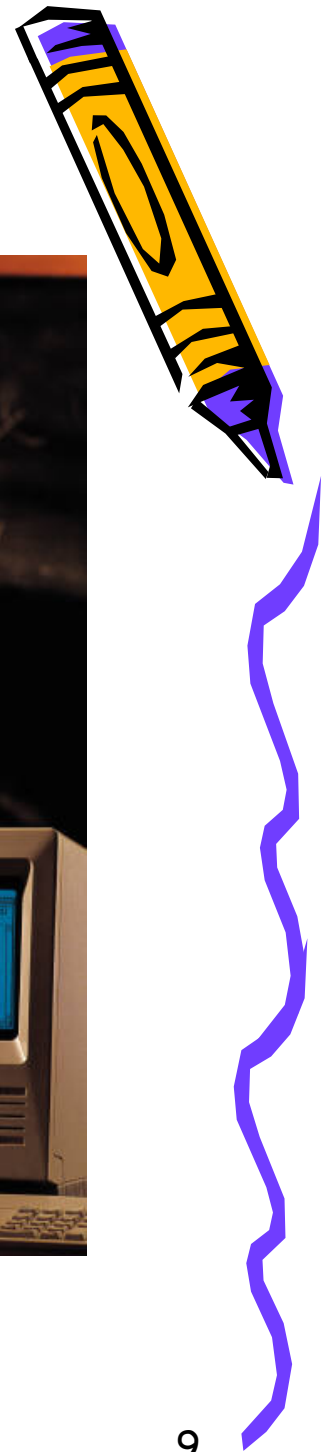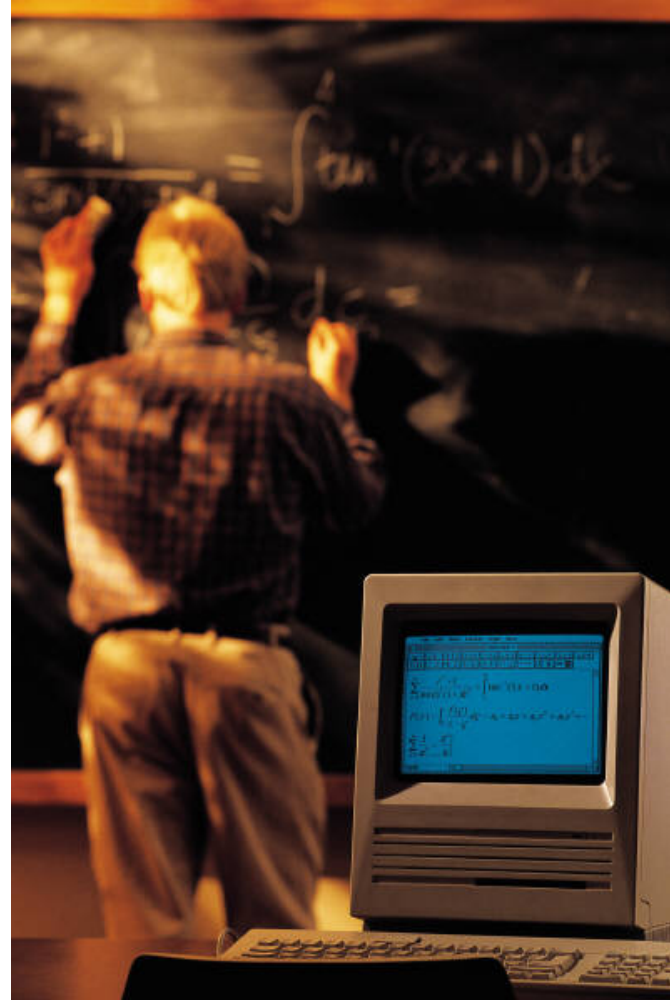
- **Peer Group**
  - These are your children's friends.
  - Standing up to "peer pressure" is the ultimate test for how well children stick to their morals.

- **The Media**
  - Parents need to monitor the content of what children are being exposed to on television, in movies, in video games, in music and on the internet.

- **Church**
  - Religious education can play a major role in the development of children's morals.

Developing Values: Beliefs That Have Worth

- *Family values* are the moral guidelines that family members believe have worth.

- For example, "No hitting."

- If a moral is to have worth, the entire family must practice it.

Why do children who know right from wrong choose to do the wrong thing anyway?

- Knowing right from wrong is not enough in doing right from wrong.

- For morals to work, they need to have value, *family value.*

- *ALL* members of the family have to practice what they preach or the words don't mean anything.

- If being cared for and gentle to others is a family moral, but parents model disrespect and violence to each other and their children, the moral has no value. Being cared for and gentle will not be a part of their children's lives.
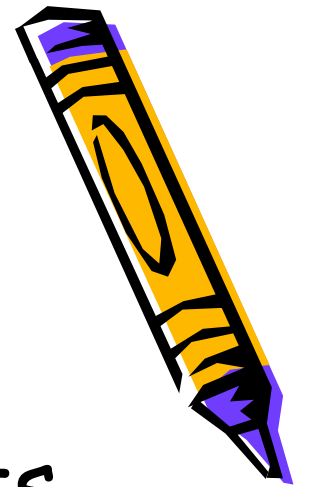
The Purpose of Family Rules

- The purpose of family rules is for parents and children to establish consistent guidelines that will help everyone know what is and what isn't expected of them.

The Purpose of Family Rules

- Family rules encourage family members to take responsibility for their own behavior and to be contributing members of the family.

The Purpose of Family Rules

- Family rules teach cooperation, and make living together much more pleasant.

- Family rules also help ensure that everyone in the family has input in how the family operates and the standards of acceptable behavior.

- **Family rules are for EVERYONE in the family!**

Family Rules

- Family rules are a set of Do's and Don'ts that serve as guidelines for carrying out family morals and values.

Family Rules

- Family rules are developed by all family members, apply to all family members, and are reviewed on a regular basis to determine how well the family is doing following the rules.

About Family Rules

- Family rules involve everyone's participation.

- So if grandpa or grandma play an active parenting role, they should be involved too.

Family Rules

- Family rules involve Do's and Don'ts.
- **Do's**
  - Let children know what IS appropriate behavior.
- **Don'ts**
  - Let children know what is NOT appropriate behavior.
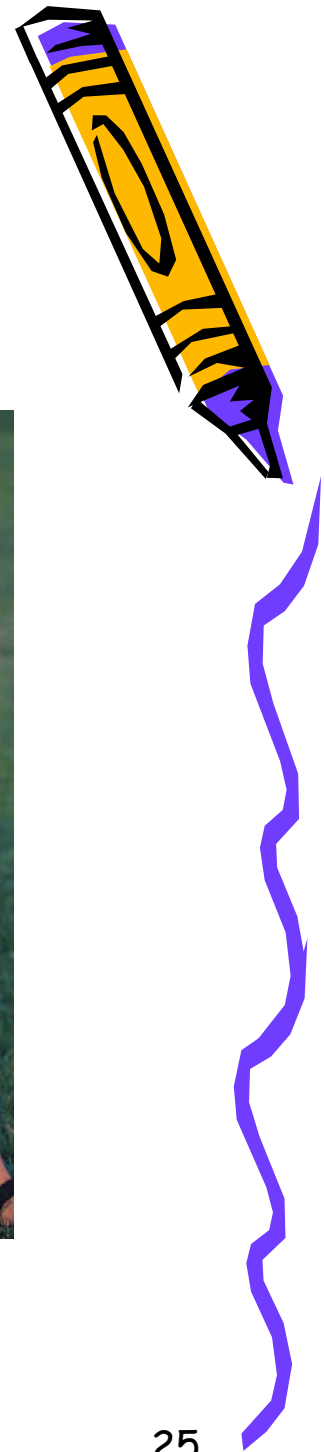
23

Family Rules

- Family rules are designed to promote and reinforce desirable behaviors.

Family Rules

- Family rules help children learn appropriate behaviors through parental modeling.

Family Rules

- In family rules, everyone is treated fairly.

How to Establish Family Rules

- **Get everyone to participate**
  - Have all family members sit around the table.
  - Have young children be present, even if they can't contribute.

- **Share problem behaviors**
  - Encourage everyone to share behaviors they feel are problems.
  - Talk freely about issues the family has to work on.
  - Avoid blaming or fault finding.

- **Have a large piece of paper and a magic marker**
  - Draw a line down the center of the top of the paper. On the top of one column, write **Do's**. On the top of the other column, write **Don'ts.**

Do's	Don'ts

- **Brainstorm a list of rules**
  - Have children be active members in brainstorming rules.
  - The goal is for parents to have the children come up with some of the rules they would like to see on the family list.
  - Repeat this process until all issues are covered.

- **Keep the rules simple and specific**
  - Be specific in wording your rules.
  - For every "what not to do", there has to be a "what to do."
  - This way you're substituting what you want for what you don't want.

- **Limit family rules to a maximum of five to seven**
  - Keeping a short list will help children remember the rules and practice them.
  - Too many rules are difficult to remember.

- **Identify a consequence and reward for each rule**
  - For rules to have meaning, a consequence must be associated with each rule.
  - When children choose to misbehave, a punishment must follow.
  - When children choose to behave, a reward must follow.

- **Hold regular family meetings to review the rules**
  - Rules are not written in concrete.
  - When a behavior is no longer a problem, have a rule dropping party.
  - The rule has now become a moral or value.
  - When new problems come up, put it on the list of Do's and Don'ts.