



SESSION

5

Family rules and consequences

NAME:

CHECKLIST SESSION 5

Family Rules & Consequences

Pre-Session planning list

To do	To buy	To prepare	Kids Matter resources
<i>Reminder message to parents</i>	<i>Refreshments</i>	<i>Post-it notes and pen</i>	<i>Guest booklets (include extra copies of S1-4 for anyone who missed a session)</i>
<i>Double check room is booked</i>	<i>Flowers</i>	<i>Kettle, mugs, water, spoons, plastic cups, plates</i>	<i>Group & crèche register</i>
<i>Sticky labels for names</i>		<i>Table cloth, napkins & tissues</i>	<i>Pens</i>
<i>Pray! And prompt others to pray for you</i>		<i>Pen & paper</i>	
<i>Crèche room and team booked</i>			

On the day:

- *Prepare tablecloth, food and flowers on the main table*
- *Tea and coffee on a separate table*
- *Offer a tea, coffee and water*
- *Record attendance and details of guests in accordance with your church/charity GDPR guidelines*

Remember: *Smile, be positive, be ready to share your good and bad experiences of parenting children of this age!*

My goals in facilitating this session:

- Parent/carer reminded that a firm and warm parenting style is optimal
- Family rules come alongside loving their child
- Parent/carer understands the root of their children's behaviour and gives appropriate consequences that are followed through
- Parent/carer recognises and manages their own angry responses to poor behaviour so they can deliver appropriate consequences calmly



Review of Session 4

Ask the group what they remember of last week's session. Last week we looked at routines, rewards and screen time.

- Routines are important for children to feel safe, settled and organised
- Rewards are different from bribes and they encourage our children to learn new and positive behaviour

Q: Were you able to use any of the ideas we talked about last week?

Celebrate any good outcomes. Encourage them to celebrate as well.

Today we are going to talk about **Family rules and consequences**. This week and last week's sessions focus on giving children guidance. Guidance is one of the building blocks we looked at in Session 1 helping children to thrive.

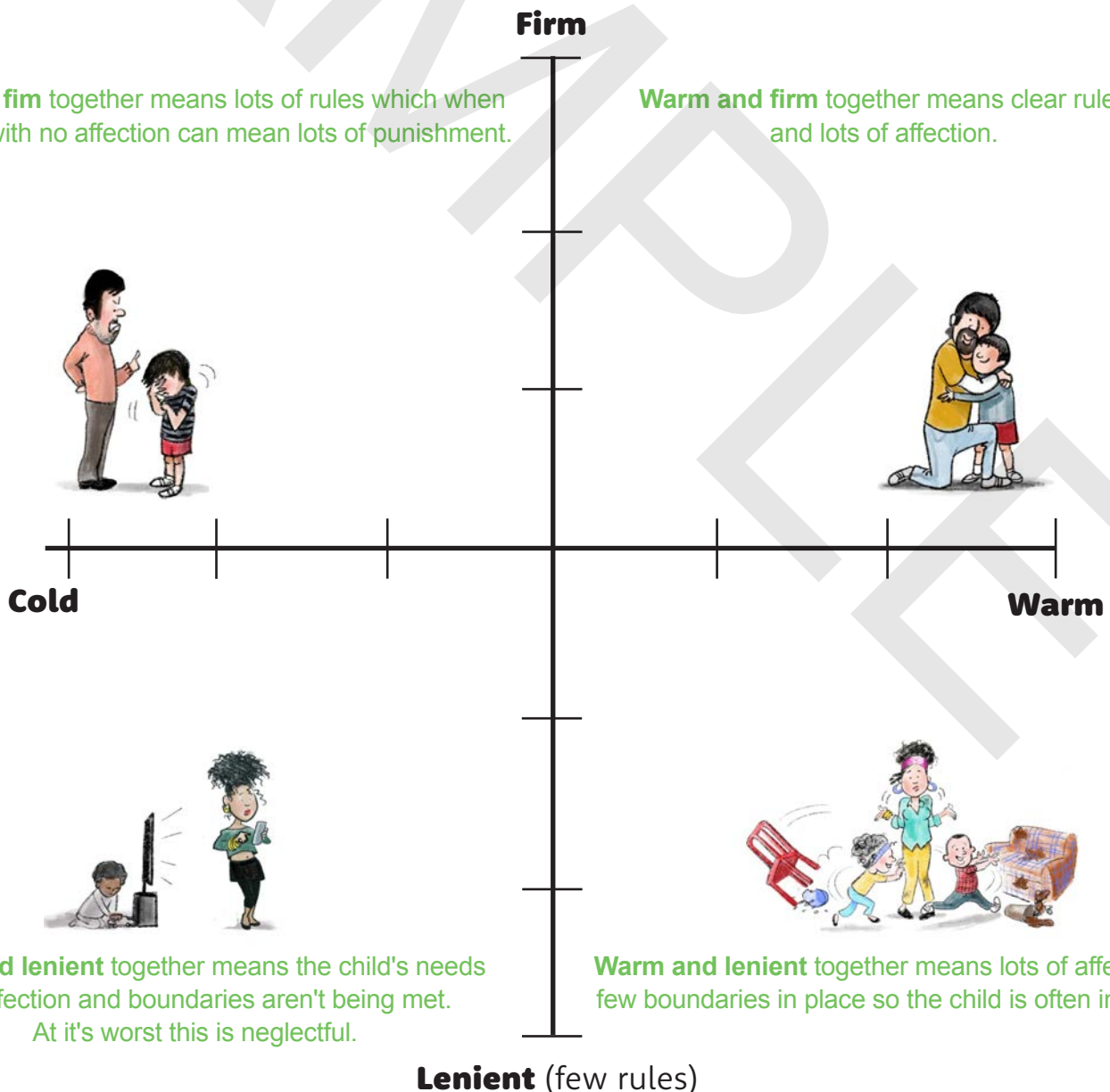


Parenting styles

To help us think about the best ways to give children guidance, we're going to remind ourselves of the different parenting styles. Q: What can you remember from the different types of parenting styles?

Cold and firm together means lots of rules which when enforced with no affection can mean lots of punishment.

Warm and firm together means clear rules and lots of affection.



Cold and lenient together means the child's needs for affection and boundaries aren't being met. At it's worst this is neglectful.

Warm and lenient together means lots of affection but few boundaries in place so the child is often in charge.

Lenient (few rules)

Let's look at family rules. It's helpful for us to think about how we can set boundaries in a warm and firm way.



Family rules

Q: Should families have rules?

Family rules are part of providing clear expectations for children so they know what's happening. Rules should be clear, agreed and few in number. We need to pick our battles. As parents, we can't work on everything at once.

(For example: Football is a great game and you can play differently each time, but to be a good game, we must all play by agreed rules. If there are no rules the game falls apart.)

Q: What are some rules that you have in your family? Or 'If I asked your children, what rules would they say you have in your family?' E.g. We will speak respectfully to one another, we will treat each other kindly.

(Remember: Make space to talk about the absent co-parent. What do they do? What would they say? What happens at their home? Etc.)

Q: How do you communicate rules with your children? *Use this as an opportunity to reinforce warm and firm.*

- Rules should come alongside loving our children - we want to be firm and warm.
- A child growing up needs to know what the family rules are and who is going to follow through with them. When we do this in a kind and firm way children feel secure.
- It is important that we explain what the consequences will be if the rules are broken, so that there are no surprises.
- We need to be consistent in sticking to these rules.

Sometimes children discover that they can get our undivided attention by misbehaving or they have learned that if they persist, we give in! This may make life easier in the moment, but over time it creates more difficulties for us and for them.

For example, has anyone had the experience of their child seeing some sweets or a toy in the supermarket and having a tantrum because they want it and you've said no? If we give in to our children after 10-minutes of them screaming (we've all been there!) they may presume the screaming worked!

Say what we mean, mean what we say!





Understanding our children

Children don't choose to lose control of their behaviour. Losing control may come if they are feeling overwhelmed or need something from us. They may also still need to learn how to manage their big feelings. This takes time. While our children are learning it's important for us to model staying calm and managing our own feelings.

Q: Can you share an example of when your child has lost control of their behaviour? (*Share your own example first*)

Q: What do our children need from us when they are misbehaving? (*Encourage the group to think about how to be understanding and try to see what their children may be needing from them*)

Use the illustration below to explain the HALT acronym.

Some reasons why children lose control and behave in an undesirable way:

H: Are they **hungry** (or thirsty)?

A: Are they **anxious** (worried or afraid of something)?

L: Do they need some one-to-one time with you, some loving attention or are they **lonely**?

Remind parents of Love Languages from Session 2 and filling up their tanks.

T: Are they **tired** and need help organising themselves and their feelings?

Q: Which of these reasons are particular triggers for your child?



We can show our children that we are trying to understand them better. If you think they're tired, acknowledge it's been a long day: "Would you like me to carry you/help you?" or, if you think they may be hungry, "it's been a while since you had something to eat, would you like something to keep you going?" This can reassure our children that we are here to help them communicate their needs and feelings.

Sometimes our children will be experiencing developmental delay or have additional needs, which may lead to behaviour we find challenging. If you are concerned about that then speak to your health visitor.

Encouraging independence

Children can get frustrated if they have no control or choices; they need to try things themselves and explore their world. Providing positive, safe choices for our children allows them to begin to make decisions which can reduce power battles and tantrums.

Q: Can you think of times you have seen your child(ren) want to do things 'their way'?

Q: Can you think of any safe ways you can give your children a chance to do things their way?

E.g. A toddler can choose which plate he eats his dinner on, pre-schoolers can choose what bedtime story to have at night, and an older child can choose between doing homework before or after dinner.

HALT does not cover all difficult behaviour, and some children struggle with different learning and behavioural challenges – if you are concerned that your child may need extra support, speak to your Health Visitor, school teacher or GP.

Let's talk about how we can help our children be their best.



Helping our children be their best

One of the best ways to deal with difficult behaviour is to stop it happening in the first place!

Q: What can help prevent tantrums and other difficult behaviour? *Use examples from this list if needed.*

- **Plan ahead** and remember H.A.L.T – is there an unmet need?
- **Communicate clearly** – Say what we mean and mean what we say.
- **Collaborate** – Work as a team allowing enough time without having the stress of rushing.
- **Offer positive choices** (of 2 things) to reduce power battles, making sure you're happy with both choices! E.g. do you want to put the toothpaste on the brush or shall I?.
- **Laughter** is often the best medicine – don't forget to bring in humour to the situation.
- **Make it fun** – If things need to be done, turn it into a fun game, use races or timers, sing a song, use a silly voice and keep encouraging them.
- **Distraction** can be helpful. Give a child something else to think about or do if they are restless or starting to misbehave.
- **Be aware of potential stresses** – Be aware that some situations might be difficult for our children. Noisy crowded spaces, meeting people or sharing with other children are all examples of situations a child might struggle with, which we can prepare for.

However much we try to prevent challenging behaviour (meltdowns), there will always be times that result in our children feeling overwhelmed by their feelings.





What do I do when my child breaks the rules?

Q: What do you normally do when your child misbehaves or breaks the rules? *Share a personal example if possible where you've found this hard.*

Sometimes things don't go to plan and our children misbehave – this is when we need to help our children understand that there are consequences. Being 'kind and firm' (rather than shouting or smacking) is key, so our children can learn.

Before we go any further let's address the issue of smacking which is something we may have experienced as a child.

Q: What does a child learn from being smacked? *Refer back to parenting styles of how smacking falls into firm and cold quadrant then read out the green box below.*

The aim here is to be clear that smacking is not recommended and to give natural/logical consequences where possible, rather than punishments.

Smacking is not a strategy we recommend.

It suggests that 'stronger' is right and that older people have a right to hit younger people. It gives the example that violence solves problems and can be physically dangerous. No-one can learn when they are afraid. Smacking teaches children to lie to avoid punishment or to avoid you.

Smacking does not build trust between parent and child.

Q: What do you think is the purpose of a consequence after misbehaviour?

Children need to understand the consequences of their behaviour. As parents, it can be easy to deliver those consequences as 'punishments'. Natural and logical consequences are more effective and make sense.

Natural Consequences	Logical Consequences
With some misbehaviours, no intervention from us is necessary, the child brings the consequences on themselves e.g. child throws a toy, it breaks!	With some misbehaviours there is a clear related consequence e.g if a child makes a mess, they help clear it up.
Delivering Consequences	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be reasonable with any consequence, the goal is for the child to learn from a mistake • Make sure the child is aware of consequences in advance • Double check they've heard you correctly • Any consequence should be related to the misbehaviour so that it feels fair 	

Q: How do we feel about these approaches?



If we are setting new rules, be aware that our child is likely to test these out and their behaviour might get worse before it gets better. Stick at it! Be consistent. After the consequence: forgive and forget. Move on!

If we can respond calmly and kindly, our child's misbehaviour can be a great learning opportunity for them!

Q: Where are you already delivering warm and firm consequences?

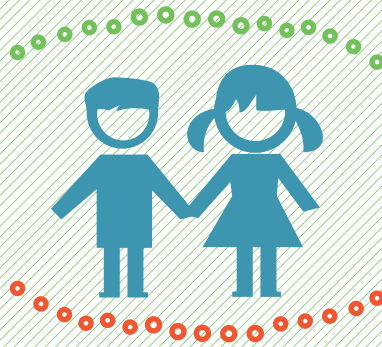
Q: What are some of the challenges for you with delivering consequences?

Consequences for younger children should be delivered as soon as possible after the misbehaviour. Consequences for older children can still be effective when delivered after everyone is calmer. The "Age Appropriate Behaviours and Consequences" sheet, on the next page, is a summary of what children can manage at each age and how we can help them. *Have a look together if you have time.*





Age Appropriate Behaviours and Consequences



Note: Smacking is unhelpful at any age so let's avoid it!



Ages 1-3

Children can understand 'NO' and the consequences of misbehaviour.

- Notice and encourage positive behaviour frequently so that the child learns what is required of them.
- **Consequences:** remove them from the negative activity.



Age 3-5

Children can understand the reasoning behind things.

- Behaviours to encourage include: kindness, cooperation, respect people and property
- **Consequences:** quiet space and time to calm down if they are angry or upset. Short-term loss of toy, outing, screen time etc.
- Be available to them if they need help calming down.
- **Rewards:** extra privileges, pasta jar, words of encouragement, treats



Ages 6-11

Children become more independent but still need our guidance, support and love.

- Issues are around balancing home and social life, homework and play, money and friendships.
- **Consequences:** loss of privileges, e.g. screen time, pocket money; natural and logical consequences, money, freedom.
- Ask them to think about their behaviour and find solutions together.
- **Rewards:** privileges like special time, outings, food, treats



How can I be warm and firm when I am finding my child's behaviour challenging?

Q: What are you like when your child upsets you or makes you feel angry?

Parenting can be exhausting and stressful, especially when our children misbehave. Sometimes our children's behaviour may trigger something painful from our past. When this happens we can easily overreact.

Adults generally react in one of two ways when feeling angry:

- Aggressively: when angry, they go on the attack, criticising others.
- Quietly: when angry, they protect themselves by withdrawing and not speaking or engaging.

Discuss the question below together, and encourage guests to discuss with their parenting teammate at home.



What is the most common reason for me to get angry whilst parenting?



Our children need us to manage our own emotions and stay calm if they are to learn how to calm down too.

If we feel angry with our children...

Q: What can we do to try and remain kind and firm when we feel angry?

- ✓ **Pause:** take a moment to think before responding
- ✓ **Breathe slowly:** take a few slow, deep breaths to calm down **before responding**
- ✓ **Look after ourselves** before attempting to deal with the issue
(Ask if people have been on an aeroplane and if they have, ask them who is meant to put on the oxygen mask first - parents or children? Explain that the parents are told to make sure they are safe first, so that they can confidently help their children.)
- ✓ **Get some perspective:** What would a good friend advise? Remember the big picture - will this matter in a few hours, a few days?
- ✓ **See things through your child's eyes:** how might they be feeling?
- ✓ **Try to remember how I want to be treated when I make mistakes or don't want to do something...**with kindness, respect and empathy
- ✓ **Let go of the need to control the outcome**
- ✓ **Trust myself:** we're doing our best



What helps me calm down and deal with my anger?



Q: What doesn't help when we feel angry? (Hear some answers then refer to the list below)

Avoid

- ✗ Dismissing, ignoring, isolating them or disapproving of their feelings
- ✗ Using words that make them feel shame or blame
- ✗ Losing our temper and yelling or withholding affection or sulking as a way of showing displeasure
- ✗ Trying to appear bigger or intimidating them in order to make them behave
- ✗ Giving in to the issue
- ✗ Getting drawn into long discussions and lectures around why we set the boundary; this is not the time
- ✗ Problem-solving in the heat of the moment; we may need to give considerable time for the climate to calm down before finding solutions

Managing our children's big feelings can be challenging for us and so finding ways to stay calm ourselves and understand our emotional triggers is just as important as helping them with their emotions.

Remind parents that past experiences, current stresses and challenges can all impact how we react to our children. Encourage talking to someone further if this feels relevant.

Repairing

Q: What about when it's over? If we feel we haven't handled the situation very well and we've lost our temper, how could we make up?

- ✓ Apologise when we've calmed down
- ✓ Hug them and tell them we love them
- ✓ Tell them it was the behaviour that made us angry, not them and we're still learning to manage our big feelings too.



Explain to guests that they can complete these questions below at home, if they would like to think about this further.



What am I doing well when delivering consequences for my children in a kind and fair way?

.....



What's one thing I can try doing differently when my children misbehave?

.....



How will these changes help me?

.....



How will these changes help my children?

.....



What challenges might I face in making these changes?

.....



Fighting between siblings

Let's also talk a bit about fighting between siblings (*if at least some parents have more than one child in the group, and you have enough time*).

Q: Do your children sometimes argue and/or fight?

Q: When your children fight, how does this make you feel?

Q: If your children are fighting, how do you decide when to intervene?

Remember, all brothers and sisters fight or argue.

It is part of normal child development for siblings to fight. Strong feelings of jealousy and competitiveness are common among siblings. Other things, such as one sibling being ill and getting more attention, or having very different personalities, can also contribute to siblings fighting. Sibling conflict is uncomfortable for parents. We don't want them to hurt each other physically or emotionally. Using a positive lens we can see that sibling conflict teaches them how to get on with others, how to negotiate and how to control their strong feelings.

When siblings argue, take a little time to look and think: do I need to intervene?

Q: How about mild bickering?

If it is mild bickering: stay out of it.

Q: What about if it gets more violent?

Do intervene if arguing gets physical, abusive or out of hand. Look at the tips on page 9 to help manage this behaviour.

All siblings should get the appropriate consequences if fighting. Similarly all siblings should get positive consequences when we notice positive behaviour. Avoid treating one child more favourably than the others - this is not kind or fair!

Ideas to build a stronger sibling bond:

1. Find activities that both your children enjoy doing
2. Don't interrupt siblings playing happily together, support them to keep playing
3. Instead of competing with each other, find ways for siblings to work as a team at something
4. Put your children in charge of a joint project
5. Encourage siblings to support and care for each other



Let's write down now:



This week if I get angry with my children I will try to:

.....



Summing up...

Today we have talked about family rules, consequences, and managing big feelings both for our children as well as for us as parents. We have also talked about siblings fighting and ways to build stronger bonds between them. We've covered a lot!

Q: What was most helpful? What will you take away from today's session?



One thing that was helpful to me this week was:



.....

Next week, we will look at the Bigger Picture, taking time to think about our long-term hopes for our families.

At the end of the session:

- *Look at Top Tips*
- *Encourage them all to come back and thank them for their contribution today*
- *Say something about what you enjoyed or learned today*
- *Offer food to them all to take away*
- *Don't rush off! Be available for anyone who wants to chat*

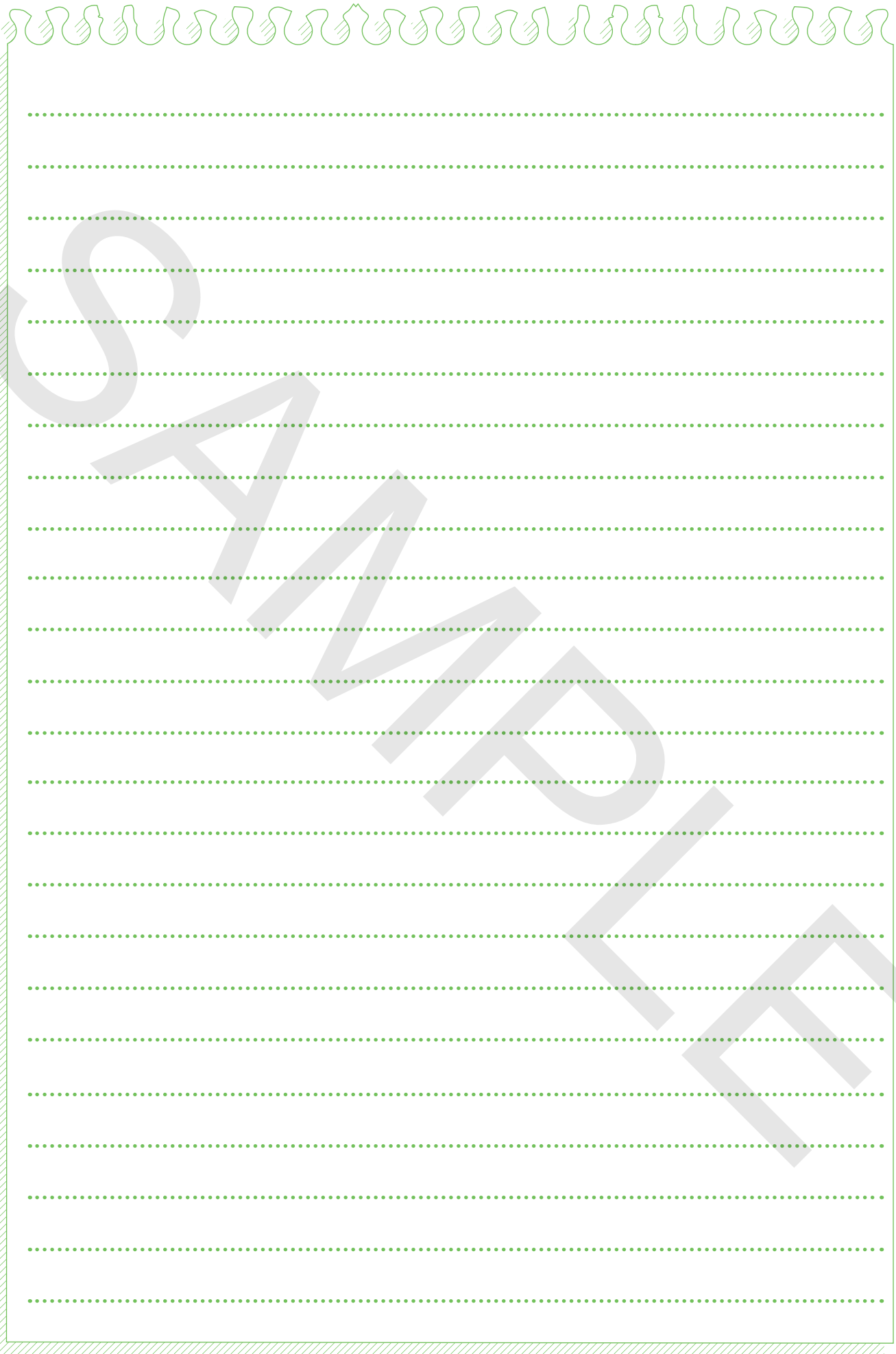
After the session:

- *Jot down any great quotes you heard today*
- *Send messages to anyone who didn't make the session*





SAMPLE





HAVE CLEAR AND FAIR

Family Rules

Understanding my children

- H.....Hungry?
- A.....Anxious?
- L.....Needing one-to-one time?
- T.....Tired?

Give my child positive, safe choices which will reduce battles between us

When things don't go to plan:

- Pause so I can respond and NOT react
- Breathe slowly
- Stick to what I said: say what I mean, mean what I say - with kindness, respect and empathy
- Try to remember how I want to be treated when upset -
- After consequence: forgive and forget - Move on!
- Apologise if I lost my temper
- Look after myself too: get support if I need it

What do I do when my child breaks the rules?

Natural Consequences

With some misbehaviours, no intervention from us is necessary, the child brings the consequences on themselves e.g. child throws a toy, it breaks!

Logical Consequences

With some misbehaviours there is a clear related consequence e.g if a child makes a mess, they help clear it up.