

Suggestions for Keeping Drinking from Interfering with Family Life

1. People who have control of their drinking say you should **plan ahead before you start drinking**, don't start drinking and *then* make a plan. (They say even *one* drink makes it harder to plan).
2. Parents that think first (*before they drink*) always make sure they plan will **ensure the supervision of the children by responsible adults**.
3. Successful adults also **make sure the plan includes safe transportation** for the children, and for themselves.
4. Sharing the plan with others seems to be very important also. Make sure you **notify friends or relatives of your plan** to drink (*prior to drinking*).
5. Successful family members **decide ahead of time how many drinks are safe to have**, and they get their families input into that decision.
6. If you have been questioned by others about your ability to control your drinking, you need to **record each step you take to fulfill your plan**. This will help everyone notice the steps you are taking to keep drinking from interfering in your family's life.
7. After trying to follow a plan, **review the success you are having in following the plan**. If you find you are unable to follow your plan and protect your family life, re-evaluate your drinking and its risk to your family.
8. If you suspect drinking may be creating difficulties for you and your family, **get a second opinion from experts in the field**, they really know what they are doing when it comes to controlling drinking.
9. People who love their families **do not let their pride get in the way**; if their plan to control their drinking doesn't work, **they will ask for professional help!**

Actions for Defeating Temper Problems

IDEASHEET

Ideas That Helped Others Prevent Problems with Temper

- Pray, practice meditation, take a yoga class; work to lower your stress level.
- Write your thoughts in a journal each day and share them later with a counselor or friend (*don't just sweep things under the rug*).
- Set up a daily routine that establishes regular sleeping times, eating times, and special times just for you (*especially if fatigue is a high risk situation for you*).
- Join a class or support group of people who are working to defeat anger.
- Study how you learned your temper, begin to see how you can “unlearn” it.
- Keep away from negative people and move closer to people you want to be like (*it may start to rub off!*).

Ideas That Helped Others Interrupt the Temper Pattern

- Practice catching yourself when you start to dwell on negative situations and feel sorry for yourself.
- If you do catch yourself, shake off those thoughts and laugh at how “special” you are making yourself. Speak a catch phrase to yourself that reminds you of your pattern, such as “*Like you're the only one who has any problems*”, or “*Oh...Mr. Tough-guy got his feelings hurt!*”. You know what will help you unhook if you catch your anger soon enough.
- Lower your voice; notice that you are lowering your voice; lower it some more.
- Immediately apologize for the tone in your voice, or your silence, or critical words, and then take a “calm break” until you are yourself again.
- Interrupt what you are doing with some action that always makes you feel better, like taking a bath, going for a walk, calling a friend.

Ideas That Helped Others When Anger Takes Them Over

- Get out of the situation, don't think, just leave. Keep the worse from happening.
- Make sure your children are safe and that you are safe until you calm down.
- Call a sponsor/counselor and talk about how the situation probably built up. Get them to help you figure out a better way to catch anger *early*.
- Take time to de-brief the “setback”, a lot of good ideas to improve your plan can come from figuring out the details of what happened.
- When you start to come around, use one of your strategies that help you interrupt the negative and refocus on the positive.
- After it is over, find something you did that shows improved control; then go to work on next steps in learning to defeat anger.

Suggestions for Controlling Anger

1. The first step is to **recognize that your “temper problem” is probably your biggest problem**, the one that makes everything else worse.
2. Once you have identified your temper as the problem, **find someone to talk to about facing up to this problem**. If you are able to do this, you will have taken a big first step toward your goal.
3. People who are successful in controlling anger say it is useful to **identify when you are most likely to lose your temper** (i.e. What kind of situations do I get worked up in?).
4. It is always helpful to **work with experts in identifying these situations**, seek counseling or a class to help you with this step.
5. Once you have figured out when you are “at risk” for your temper to sneak up on you, try to **notice what is happening inside of your right as your temper starts to rise**. These thoughts or feelings will be your early warning signals that you are headed down the “old road”.
6. If you have identified your personal early warning signals, you need to **congratulate yourself** because you are well on the way to avoiding or at least limiting the effects of your temper.
7. Research has found that people who have been successful in controlling their temper all have a way to **catch the feeling early and take quick action** to avoid it getting any worse.
8. The next step is to **find out what quick action works best for you** to prevent, interrupt, or if necessary, escape an anger episode. See if the *Idea Sheet on Defeating Temper Problems* can give you some ideas.
9. Finding out what works for you always takes practice! Try to **notice small signs or indicators that you are changing**, maybe you are starting to catch it earlier, or you are walking away from potential risk situations. Tell someone about that change.
10. Finally, **CELEBRATE the courage of each small step**, they add up to one big journey!

Suggestions for Getting Rid of Head Lice

What are head lice?

Head lice are tiny, barely visible insects that live in the hair and scalp of humans. They survive by sucking blood from the scalp and depositing their eggs on the shafts of human hair, very near the scalp. The eggs (called nits) are deposited with a sticky substance that makes them hard to remove without special shampoo and special combs. They are most easily seen in bright light.

How do they get into a family members hair?

Lice do not jump or fly, however they get around quite easy through simply touch, usually a result of children playing together. They also can be passed along through shared clothing, combs, brushes, towels, bed sheets or stuffed animals. Contact with carpets, couches and auto seats can also result in getting lice if someone with lice has used these items recently.

Steps to get rid of head lice!

1. Shampoo with lice shampoo (and conditioner) available over the counter at your drug-store. The shampoo and conditioner has a pesticide in it, which will help kill most of the lice and the nits.
2. Use the special lice comb (also available through the pharmacist at your drug store) to remove dead lice and eggs from the hair. You should know that the combs do not always work at getting the eggs and you will have to pick the remaining ones off by hand. This is why some people cut their hair shorter in order to ease sliding the nit down the strand and off the end.
3. Examine other family members to spot lice or eggs and use the same shampoo and conditioner on their hair if there is any suspicion of lice or eggs.
4. Think of all the household items (clothing, towels, sheets, etc) that need to be washing in order to remove lice and nits from them. These items must be washing in very hot water (130°).
5. Place the larger items like stuffed animals, coats and blankets in a hot dryer for a least 20 minutes *after* each use.
6. Use a lice spray (also available at drug store) on the floors and carpeting.
7. It is important to insure that combs and brushes are clean by soaking them in the lice shampoo or in water that is at least (130°).
8. For one week after the first shampoo, check the entire family each day for signs of lice or nits. Also, continue to vacuum all floors and rugs each day.
9. After one week, repeat the shampoo treatment, coming and “nit-picking” any remaining eggs.

Actions for Keeping Your Home Safe

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Ideas to use in the Kitchen

- Place hazardous cleaners out of reach of small children or unformed teens and adults.
- Use safety latches on drawers and cabinets.
- Place stove covers on all burners.
- Keep fire extinguishers within easy and quick reach.
- Dispose of plastic grocery or shopping bags.

Ideas to use in the Bathroom

- Never leave small children unattended in the bathroom.
- Never leave a bathtub full of water unattended.
- Purchase inexpensive plastic plugs for all electrical outlets.
- Keep all medicine in child proof bottles and out of their reach.
- Install a seat latch on the toilet.
- Turn off the hot water first when drawing the bathwater.
- Dispose of razor blades by putting them in a latched cabinet or take them outside.

Ideas to use in the Living Room

- Keep fans and space heaters screened and out of reach of children.
- Remove or shorten any electrical cord in reach of children.
- Keep toys picked up and returned to their storage place.
- Keep windows closed and locked, or in some way protected.
- Secure loose or sharp edged furniture.

Ideas to use in the Bedroom

- Keep pillow out of crib until baby is one year old.
- Never lock a baby in a room.
- Make sure closets open from the inside.
- Keep older children's toys out of reach.
- Remove batteries from any toys used by small children.

Suggestions for **Overcoming Discouragement**

1. The first step is to **recognize that “becoming discouraged” is probably your biggest problem**, it can make everything else worse.
2. Once you have identified “discouragement” as the problem, **find someone to talk to about this problem**. If you are able to do this, you will have taken a first step toward your goal.
3. People who are successful in overcoming discouragement say it is useful to identify **when you are most likely to get discouraged** (i.e. What kind of situations do I get discouraged in?).
4. It is often helpful to **work with experts in identifying these situations**, seek counseling or a class to help you with this step.
5. Once you have figured out when you are “at risk” for not fighting off “discouragement”, try to **notice what is happening inside of you right as discouragement starts to come over you**. These thoughts or feelings will be your *early warning signals*.
6. If you have identified your personal early warning signals, you need to **congratulate yourself** because you are well on the way to avoiding or at least limiting the effects of discouragement.
7. Research has found that people who have been successful in overcoming discouragement all have a way to **catch the feelings early and take immediate action** to avoid it getting any worse.
8. The next step is to **find out what actions works best for you** to avoid certain situations, or get out of them (if you can’t avoid them) before “discouragement” can really take hold of you. See if the *Idea Sheet on Overcoming Discouragement* can give you some ideas.
9. Finding out what works for you always takes practice! Try to **notice small signs or indicators that you are starting to overcome disappointment** more than you used to, and then *tell someone* about that change.
10. Finally, **CELEBRATE each small step**, they add up to one big journey!

Actions for Overcoming Discouragement

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Ideas That Helped Others Prevent Problems the Discouragement Pattern

- Pray, practice meditation, take a yoga class.
- Write your thoughts in a journal each day and leave them there!
- Set up a daily routine that establishes regular sleeping times, eating times, and special times just for you.
- See your physicians for medication that is sometimes necessary to balance the body's ability to ward off discouragement.
- Follow physicians prescription, talk to them if something is not right instead of deciding on your own to make a change.
- Join a support group of people who are starting to change their lives.
- Get plenty of exercise doing things you enjoy, take a friend!

Ideas That Helped Others Interrupt the Discouragement Pattern

- Practice catching yourself when you start to dwell on negative situations.
- If you do catch yourself, try putting your feelings into perspective, or listing your strengths, or just letting go of the thoughts and refocusing on something positive.
- Make a list of positive things in your life or positive thoughts that you like to think about.
- Immediately apologize for the tone in your voice, or your silence, or critical words, and then take a "calm break" until you are yourself again.
- Interrupt what you are doing with some action that always makes you feel better, like taking a bath, going for a walk or calling a friend.

Ideas That Helped Others When Discouragement Overwhelms Them

- Call a sponsor/counselor and talk about how the situation probably built up. Get them to remind you that this moment will pass.
- Make sure your children are safe and that you are safe.
- Take time to de-brief the "setback", a lot of good ideas to improve your plan can come from figuring out the details of what happened.
- When you start to come around, use one of your strategies that help you interrupt the negative and refocus on the positive.

Suggestions for Parenting Teenagers

1. **Set realistic rules** about curfew, whereabouts, and acceptable behavior. Make sure the rules are clear, repeated consistently and matter of factly.
2. Enforcing the rules will go much better if you can insure that other adult **family members are in general agreement** with the rules and will support them if necessary.
3. **Involve your teenagers in the decisions** about rules as they mature. Encourage their involvement whenever possible.
4. **Determine specific consequences/punishment** for breaking the family rules, i.e. grounding, transportation, special privileges, telephone calls, being with friends, etc.
5. **Make the consequence “fit the crime”**. Sometimes a small consequence that is easily enforced is better than a big consequence that may be very difficult to enforce.
6. Balance your discipline with **equal attention to praise and affection**, even during times of limit setting. Teenagers need reassurance that they are loved even when they act like they don't care (but, definitely not in front of others!).
7. Set a goal to **manage your own emotions** in difficult situations. Show your teenager that you can avoid screaming, calling names or striking out at them even when very frustrated with them.
8. Have a plan to **take care of yourself** so that your stress level doesn't become overwhelming. If you are “out of stream”, you can be at risk to “blow off steam” with your teenager.
9. **Celebrate the progress** that you and your youth make. Change comes in small steps and can be overlooked if you don't stop to notice the little ways they and you are both improving.

Suggestions for **Setting Up Family Chores**

1. Parents will want to **set a good example** by sharing the responsibility and duties involved in family life.
2. Remember to **consider age when assigning duties**. Even young children can begin to participate if the task is short and coached. As kids get older, the tasks can get harder.
3. Start by **listing all the possible things that need to be done**. Be sure to involve the children in making up the list.
4. Consider **rotating assignments of chores**, particularly ones that everyone likes or dislikes.
5. It is helpful to **decide or assign clear time frames** for completing each task.
6. Decide on **reasonable consequences and rewards** ahead of time. This discussion can include the children's suggestions as well.
7. Assume you will need to **provide some helpful reminders** (notes, lists, charts). Kids may want to help create these reminders depending on their age.
8. Don't assume kids know or should know how to do something. Parents who **teach them how to do the task**, by breaking the tasks down, have much better results.
9. When (not if) a chore does not get done, **avoid "nagging" conversations or arguments about it**. Just remind them of the agreed upon consequences and then stick with your plan.
10. Parents will want to **practice their plan to keep calm** and in control of their emotions when working with their children. Otherwise, chores will become a real chore!
11. Celebrate small steps of progress and celebrate often!

Suggestions for **Improving School Attendance**

1. Parents have found that they have to **begin the night before** if they are to be successful in the morning.
2. It is very important to **have a specific bedtime for school nights** that allows at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep.
3. Parents find it effective to **prepare for the morning** by putting school books by the door, laying out clothes, and discussing any activities that will be occurring in the next school day.
4. It is helpful to **have a regular morning routine** for waking up, getting cleaned up and eating some breakfast.
5. You will want to **teach your children to use an alarm clock**, and you to have yours set to wake you up prior to your children.
6. When parents are not home in the morning due to work, it is often necessary to have a trusted person check on the children to **insure they get ready and actually leave for school**.
7. Parents often choose to take the child to school, or walk with them to somehow **insure they get on the school bus or arrive at school**.
8. Parents who **work in partnership with the school** (i.e. daily contact, requesting daily/weekly progress reports, thank you cards) are the most successful at improving school attendance.
9. It is important for parents to **establish consequences** for tardiness or non-attendance (i.e. no TV, no visitors, no phone calls).
10. If the child is suspended, **request an in-school suspension**.
11. If school performance is an issue, **request testing for appropriate school/class placement**.
12. Remember to **celebrate and reward good attendance** as soon as it occurs on a routine basis.

Suggestions for Using "Time Out"

1. It is helpful to **use time out early in the behavior**, before the child (or parent) loses too much control.
2. Parents will want to **keep the time out period reasonable**, not too long, (many parents use the 1 or 2 minutes per year formula).
3. You will want to **have clear agreement on the family rules** and insure that the child understands what behavior will consistently result in time out.
4. Try to **give clear warning when misbehavior is noticed**, prior to giving children time out, then follow through on time out.
5. Parents need to **realize it will take time to learn a new skill**. Parents who understand this seem to do better than those who want a child to change immediately.
6. Once the child is in time out and starts to calm or quiet down, it is **helpful for parents to "declare victory"** and help the child return to normal activity with lots of praise for regaining self-control.
7. Parents will find it helpful to **"let go" of an incident afterwards** and **take time to reconnect** with their child in a positive way right after a time out.
8. Parents find it helpful to **have a plan to keep calm** and under control in order to **set an example** to their children and to avoid the costs of losing self-control when frustrated.

Suggestions for **Parenting Young Children**

1. **Set realistic rules** about bedtime, boundaries, and acceptable behavior. Make sure the rules are clear, repeated consistently and matter of factly.
2. Enforcing the rules will go much better if you can insure that other **adult family members are in general agreement** with the rules and will support them if necessary.
3. **Involve children in the decisions** about rules as they mature. Encourage their involvement when possible.
4. **Determine specific consequences/punishment** for breaking the family rules (i.e. no television, bike riding, video games, telephone calls, being with friends, etc).
5. Very **young children benefit from time out** or other immediate consequences to misbehavior like re-direction of their interests to some other less disturbing activity.
6. Balance discipline with **equal attention to praise and affection**, even during times of limit setting. Young children need reassurance that they are still loved even though they are being required to behave differently.
7. Set a goal to **manage your own emotions** in difficult situations. Show your child that you can avoid screaming, calling names or hitting them even when very frustrated with them.
8. Have a plan to **take care of yourself** so that your stress level doesn't become overwhelming. If you are "out of steam", you can be at risk to "blow off steam" with your child.
9. **Celebrate the progress** that you and your child make. Change comes in small steps and can be overlooked if you don't stop to notice the little ways they and you are improving.

Suggestions for **Supervising Young Children**

1. It is important (and sometimes a challenge!) to always **keep your child within sight and hearing distance**. Often times this takes **planning ahead and re-organizing** your usual way of doing things.
2. Make it a goal to **always make a quick scan** of your child's immediate environment. Look for potential objects or situations that could harm your child.
3. When you allow your child to play outdoors, practice being **aware of the outside environment**, just as you did indoors.
4. Make it a priority to **put barriers around potential dangers**, such as radiators, stairs, open windows, household chemicals, drugs, cigarette lighters and matches.
5. Children are very curious so it is important to **have door locks, or door catchers on cabinets** out of reach of young children.
6. Parents will want to **have a specific plan for firearms** in the home. Gun locks are viewed by gun experts as an absolute necessity.
7. Parents find it important to **choose age appropriate friends** as well as age appropriate toys and equipment.
8. Parents who have to leave the home to use the phone need a special **plan to supervise the children during phone calls**.
9. Parents find it helpful to **confirm baby-sitting arrangements**, sometimes problems come up unexpectedly. Make sure the sitter has emergency numbers.
10. Parents with even a small substance abuse problem will want to **use personal relapse prevention plan** to keep substance abuse from threatening their children's safety.

Suggestions for Toilet Training

1. A positive experience is greatly enhanced when parents set the tone with the decision to **keep it positive and relaxed**.
2. Timing also seems to be important, it is best when parents **wait to see early signs that kids are ready**. These might include being dry through the night, expressing an interest in “potty”, awareness that they have had a bowel movement or urinated (usually between two and three years old).
3. Think ahead and **gather up the right equipment** (small potty chair, training pants, pull-ups and kids books, etc).
4. In the beginning it helps to **visit the potty frequently but not too long at a time**. Try to visit the first thing in the morning, before and after nap, after meals, after snacks, before outings.
5. Each visit **should be planned as fun with lots of praise** for each thing they do, i.e. “Oh, you sit there just like a big girl don’t you!”.
6. Decide ahead of time you will **accept all accidents as if they were absolutely not a problem**. You can say things like, “Oh, that’s OK, I’ll bet you will learn to put them in the potty real soon, you are so smart!”.
7. If they are successful in using the toilet, **plan a small reward** to go with the praise.
8. Remember to **view this learning as long term**, that it may take several months and may have a few “accidents” along the way.
9. If you find yourself losing your temper and not following your plan, **talk to a professional about it** (health specialist, social worker, counselor) and get more detailed help.

Suggestions for **Preparing for Pre-School**

Although not necessarily easy, it usually works best when:

1. Parents who **start preparing themselves and their child early** seem to adjust to the changes more smoothly.
2. Parents are helped to **prepare through reading books** from the library about “what to look for in a good daycare”.
3. Children are helped to prepare when their parents **read children’s books to them with stories about daycare**; also available at the library or bookstore.
4. Parents find it helpful to **visit one or more daycares** to meet the people, know the travel route, and prepare a mental picture to discuss favorably with their child.
5. It is also helpful to **meet other families** whose children attend the same day care or school.
6. Before the first day arrive, **discuss the school in positive terms** and go over expected behavior with the child.
7. Parents who take the time to **volunteer in their child’s day care** or school find it very beneficial to their child’s adjustment.
8. Be sure to **familiarize your child and yourself to schedules and procedures** by arranging a visit during the school hours.
9. Help the child have a good morning routine by insuring that he or she **gets to bed early**.

Suggestions for Coping with Divorce

1. Studies have shown that the child experiences less conflict if the parents **try very hard to never say anything bad about the other parent** in front of the child.
2. It is helpful to **assure the child that the divorce was not their fault** and provide an explanation that the child can understand (i.e. Mommy and Daddy just couldn't get along and argued too much).
3. Parents will want to **frequently assure the child that both parents love them** and will always be involved in their life.
4. Parents find it helpful to the child to **discuss how the child's basic needs will be met**, giving examples for the child to better understand.
5. It is not unusual for parents going through a divorce to **seek professional counseling or support groups**; it is a good time to get ideas from other people.
6. Parents want to **avoid using the child as a "weapon"**, or means of getting back at the absent parent, even if the other parent does so.
7. It is important to **go slow when including others into family activities**. Children may need to be assured that even if you are their other parent should re-marry there will always be enough love to go around and they will always be a part of the family.
8. Parents will want to **remind the child that it is okay to feel sad** and that it helps to talk about their emotions out loud.

Suggestions for Blended Families

Although not necessarily easy, it usually works best when:

1. The biological parent retains the attitude and behavior that demonstrates that they are still the primary parent and will **maintain their responsibility for the rules and discipline** that apply to *their* children.
2. The **biological parent utilizes the support and ideas of the step-parent**. One of the most powerful forms of support the step-parent can offer is just listening.
3. The biological parent realized that their **child needs special time, praise, encouragement and affection** just from *them*.
4. The **step-parent goes slow in assuming disciplinary roles** and gives the children a change to get to know them; this process can take several years.
5. Parents assume the **step-siblings will need coaching** about how to get along and that disagreements are part of all families, not just blended families.
6. **Divorced parents should deal with each other directly** rather than using spouses, children or relatives to carry messages. If that is not possible, the use of a mediator is very helpful.
7. Parents should **expect that there will be different rules**, traditions and expectations at different households. Kids can adjust to accepted differences better than when there is conflict over there differences.
8. It almost always helps for the **parents to have a plan to take care of themselves** so that their stress level doesn't become too overwhelming.

Suggestions for Parents of **Physically Harmed Children**

1. Although it is hard, it is best for children when parents are able to **reduce or eliminate the yelling, fighting and arguing.**
2. Be aware of difficult developmental tasks and develop a plan to **model patience and reassurance.**
3. It is very helpful to **provide specific structure around every day routines** that outline individual tasks and/or responsibilities in order to minimize confusion.
4. Try to **reward positive behaviors** and **utilize non-physical discipline** techniques for negative behaviors.
5. Parents are more helpful when they **protect the children from adult disagreements.** These issues are best discussed in a private setting away from children.
6. Be able to recognize behaviors of the child that trigger each family member and **devise a plan to deal with trigger behaviors** in a calm manner.
7. Recognize your own limitations and **develop a plan to take care of yourself.** Set aside an amount of time each week to spend for yourself or with spouse.
8. Develop a list of friends and/or relatives who would be available to **provide short-term relief for parents.**

Suggestions for Parents of **Aggressive Children**

Parents of children who are difficult to manage due to hitting, biting or other aggressive behaviors have learned that:

1. Aggressive children do best when parents **provide consistent structure (rules, routines, etc)** for everyday family activities. Without consistent structure, their emotions are difficult to control.
2. Parents and caretakers find they personally have to **avoid screaming, name calling, throwing things or hitting other family members**, *even* when provoked by the child's behavior, in order to set an example.
3. Parents find they work better as a team when they **plan ahead what behavior will be acceptable and unacceptable**, based on an understanding of the child's age appropriate abilities.
4. Parents and caretakers are more confident and consistent when they **discuss and try to seek agreement on how they will respond** to their child's behavior, and when they develop options for difficult situations that might arise.
5. Parents who **learn non-aggressive discipline techniques** such as time-out, charting, rewards and natural consequences seem to do much better with helping their children learn to control aggression.
6. Parents often say it is necessary to **study and learn their own pattern of reacting to difficult and stressful situations**, so they can "*practice what they preach*". Aggressive children can trigger significant emotions in all parents.
7. Structure time to **provide opportunities for play that are safe, calm and simple**. Aggressive children have a deep need to feel safe and loved. Play that becomes rough is discontinued.
8. Children who have been aggressive in the past are helped when their **parents notice when they are able to control their anger**, and find ways to reward the non-aggressive behavior.

Suggestions for Parents of **Sexually Reactive Children**

1. Parents will want to **respect each family member's privacy** by having family rules around bathing, dressing, and sleeping.
2. It is helpful for parents to provide clear instruction and **support for not keeping secrets**.
3. Parents will need to teach their children, with the help of others, about **acceptable and non-acceptable touching** behavior for themselves and others.
4. The children may need help from their parents or others to learn the **difference between affection and sexual touch**.
5. These children find it helpful to **talk about their feelings** and fears in a safe environment.
6. Parents will want to develop a **positive plan for managing behaviors** such as nightmares, bedwetting, soiling, aggression, masturbation, etc.
7. These children benefit from patient parents with clear expectations. **Parents may need a personal plan** to help keep themselves calm and non-reactive.
8. Parents need a plan to ensure that **others respect their child's physical and emotional boundaries**. This would include other family members, caretakers, and family friends.