

# WEEK 11: SET SOME NEW RULES

(and motivate your helpers)

Let's all be honest – when we're in the early stages of motherhood, it's easy to let certain...*habits* take hold. For example, maybe you threw up your hands and decided to your two-year-old start eating crackers on the floor in front of *Caillou* every morning because it was the only way you could get the breakfast dishes done. The tradeoff was worth it for a while, but now your living room has become a food free-for-all, with crumbs permanently ground into the carpet to prove it.



Or maybe you're like me. At some point (probably because I had a sleeping and/or nursing baby permanently cemented to my arms and couldn't do much about it) I decided to stop fighting my preschoolers' inclination to sit on the tops of the sofa cushions. By the time I finally emerged out of the constant nursing/napping baby stage, the cushions were hopelessly squashed and tearing away from the sofa frame.

We've all had moments – or months! – when we've let things slide just to get through the day. But one of the nice things about being Beyond Baby is that having two hands free and kids who are old enough to follow directions allows you to start getting a handle on the state of your home.

First, though, you'll have to create some new house rules.



## Your Challenge: Establish New Rules & Routines

First, I want you to take a tour of your house, especially the parts you and your kids spend the most time in, and really *notice* what's going on. Which areas of the house feel cluttered or chaotic? Are there certain things you feel like you always have to deal

with – whether it’s picking up Wii remotes, getting throw pillows off the floor, or sponging up the latest spill?

Now, using your Beyond Baby workbook, jot down some of those “trouble spots” and brainstorm new house rules and rituals that could help. For example, maybe you’ll establish a “no eating in the living room” rule, or ask everyone to start putting remote controls back on the coffee table or entertainment system before leaving the room.

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Once you’ve come up with a handful of rules, it’s time for the hard part – *training*. Explain to your family that you are going to be doing a few things differently in order to make the house a nicer place for everyone to live and play in, show them exactly what you want them to do, and then expect to spend some time overseeing and reminding as necessary.

Establishing new house rules requires consistency and a watchful eye at first, but I promise, it will pay off in the end! There is an enormous amount of mental and emotional energy that’s freed when you don’t have to clean up (or step over) the same mess over and over again.

I suggest that one of your house rules be a regular family clean-up session before the kids go to bed. It’s a great way to help bring closure to their day, and has the added benefit of helping to make your home a comfy haven for grown-up time in the evening! In our house Clara picks up toys, the little boys straighten couch cushions and toss pillows, and one of the big boys gives the room a quick vacuum. It takes them about five minutes tops and it gives Mom and Dad a much more pleasant evening.

Your child’s age and developmental stage will play a big part in determining how you get him or her on board with the new rules, and it’s almost certain that there will be backsliding. Don’t worry about perfection, just make progress. One rule – and reminder - at a time.



## Challenge Checklist

- ✓ Take a tour of your house, making note of areas of clutter and chaos.
- ✓ Brainstorm new rules and rituals to help “trouble spots”
- ✓ Explain new rules to family and train your helpers!
- ✓ Write notes & observations in workbook