

PARENTING TIP

Children Outgrow Rules but Not Values

As children get older, parents gradually release control of decision-making and allow their kids greater freedom to make choices for themselves. Too much freedom too early can be disastrous but too much control and then instant freedom can be dangerous as well.

The key to making good decisions has a lot to do with values, but children don't get to hear about values as often. Children hear rules. If, when your kids are growing up, you talk about the values behind the rules then when they have the freedom to make their own decisions, they'll be able to do so with wisdom.

Children outgrow rules, but they don't outgrow values. When kids are young you may not allow them to go down the street without an adult. When they get a little older they'll have to check in and be home at a certain time. Those are rules but they come out of very important values of safety and accountability. When a college student is invited to stay out late with her friends, those values from childhood will still ring true, and will help guide her to wise decisions.

Prepare now for your child's future decision-making. What are the values behind the rules you've created? Share those values regularly as opportunities to teach your kids. Your children will carry the values on for the rest of their lives.

This idea was taken from the book **Home Improvement, The Parenting Book You Can Read To Your Kids**