

# Parent Guide

**Episode Theme:** How families can be different — and how to be respectful while still following your own family’s rules

**Primary age:** 6–9

**Extended use:** 10–18

---

## Before Watching (Ages 6–9)

You might say:

“This video is about how families can do things differently.”

“And how we can be respectful of others while still following our own family’s rules.”

Optional questions:

- “Do you think all families have the same rules?”
- “Have you ever noticed something different at a friend’s house?”

Keep the tone light and curious.

---

## During Watching

You can watch together or nearby.

If helpful, pause once or twice to ask:

- “What do you think the child is feeling?”
- “What would you do?”

No need to correct answers.

---

## After Watching (Ages 6–9)

### 1. Normalize differences



You might say:

“Families make different choices for lots of reasons.”

“Different doesn’t mean wrong. It just means different.”

---

## **2. Teach the simple language**

Practice together:

“Can I check with my parent first?”

Explain:

“You don’t need a long explanation. That sentence is enough.”

---

## **3. Reinforce that pausing is allowed**

Say:

“If something feels confusing or uncomfortable, you’re allowed to stop and ask.”

“You won’t be in trouble for checking.”

---

## **4. Keep the focus on choice, not fear**

Avoid:

- “That house is unsafe.”
- “They have bad rules.”
- “We’re stricter.”

Instead:

- “Different house, different rules.”
  - “You can still make your own choice.”
-

# How Parents Can Respectfully Ask About Other Families' Rules (Playdates)

Checking in ahead of time helps everyone feel comfortable.

Here are natural, general ways to ask:

## Open-ended

“Anything I should know about how you usually run playdates at your place?”

“Are there any house rules I should share with my kid ahead of time?”

“Is there anything you’d want me to tell them before they come over?”

## Values-based

“Every family does things a little differently, so I like to check in.”

“We try to be clear with our kid about expectations, so I always ask.”

## Logistics + safety

“Will an adult be home the whole time?”

## Setting your boundary (calm + neutral)

“We understand every family does things a little differently.”

“Our main rule is that if our child isn’t sure they’re allowed to do something, they should check with us first.”

or

“If anything comes up, we always tell them to call us.”

---

## How to Explain This to Your Child (simple version)

“Every family has their own rules.”

“Your job isn’t to decide if they’re right or wrong.”

“Your job is to check with me if you’re unsure.”

---

## For Older Kids (10–12)

You can begin expanding the conversation to include:

- peer pressure
- comfort levels
- digital boundaries
- polite refusal

Offer phrases to practice:

- “That’s not really my thing.”
- “I think I’ll pass.”
- “I should check with my parent first.”

Emphasize:

Respecting others does not mean copying them.

---

## For Teens (13+)

As kids grow, differences between households may include:

- alcohol in the home
- parties
- vaping or marijuana exposure
- less supervision
- different curfews or rules

This is a natural shift from “**check with me**” to **planning together**.”

---

## Talking With Your Teen

You might say:

“Different families handle things like alcohol or parties differently.”

“You don’t need to judge their choices.”

“But you do get to decide what feels right for *you*.”

“Just because something is allowed at someone else’s house doesn’t mean it has to be right for you.”

“If you ever feel unsure, you can call or text me — no lectures, no trouble.”

“And if you don’t want to explain, you can use our code word.”

“I’ll come get you or call you with an excuse. No questions asked in the moment.”

---

## Give Teens Practical Exit Language

Help them practice:

- “I’m good, thanks.”
- “Not tonight.”
- “I have to be up early.”
- “My parents are picking me up.”

They do not owe explanations.

---

## Talking With Other Parents (Teens)

It is normal and responsible to be direct.

Examples:

“I like to check in about supervision — will adults be home?”

“Do you allow alcohol at gatherings? We just want to be clear so we can set expectations.”

“Our rule is no drinking or vaping. If anything comes up, we ask that the kids call us.”

“If plans change, please let us know — we’ll do the same.”

---

## If Values Don't Align

You can be respectful and firm:

“Thanks for being open. We’re going to sit this one out.”

Or:

“We’re comfortable with them hanging out earlier, just not staying late.”

Model calm boundaries — not criticism.

---

## What Teens Should Hear

“Your safety matters more than fitting in.”

“You won’t be in trouble for calling.”

“You’re allowed to change your mind.”

---

## Why This Approach Works

This framework teaches:

- respect for differences
- self-advocacy
- emotional safety
- communication skills
- boundary-setting
- social confidence

Without:

- fear
- shame
- judgment
- or lectures

## Important Note for Parents and Caregivers

This parent guide is provided for **educational and informational purposes only**. It is not intended to replace medical, psychological, legal, or substance use treatment advice.

Every child and family situation is different. The strategies and suggestions shared here are meant to support thoughtful conversation and prevention-focused parenting, but they may not apply to all circumstances. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to use their own judgment and to consult qualified professionals when appropriate.

Neither the producers of *Awkward Conversations*, nor the participating organizations, hosts, or guests assume responsibility for decisions made based on this material.

If you believe a child or family member may be at risk of harm, please seek immediate professional support or contact local emergency services

