



PARENT TRUST
FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN

1601 2nd Avenue, Suite 410 ▪ Seattle, WA 98101
1-800-932-HOPE ▪ www.parenttrust.org

THE 10-FOOT RULE

Feeling like a bad parent because you are just one second from losing your cool with your child?

- Are you clenching your fists?
- Clenching your jaw?
- Feeling knots in your stomach?
- Heart racing?
- Raising your voice?
- Rubbing your head because it is about to burst?

Step #1: Remember the 10-Foot Rule! Make sure that your child is in a safe place and then keep 10 feet away from them until you have had time to calm down.

Step #2: Coach yourself into calmness: Parenting research says that parents not only need to coach their kids – they need to coach themselves!!!! Here are some examples of what parents can say to themselves to calm down:

- “This is normal. Every parent has moments when they have totally run out of patience with their child.”
- “I am starting to lose it and I need to take a break.”
- “Smart parents know when to stay 10 feet away from their kids and calm down!”
- “I don’t want to do anything that would hurt my child – so I am going to move 10 feet away.”

Step #3: Practice, Practice, Practice: You can read every parenting tip in the world, but if you don’t **USE THE TIPS** you won’t improve your parenting.

Practice the 10-Foot Rule: Practice the 10-foot rule at least once a day – even if you aren’t that upset, so that when you do get upset you will know exactly what to do.

Put up a 10-Foot Rule Sign: Put a sign on your fridge or your mirror or on your calendar that says, “Don’t forget the 10-foot rule!”

Teach a Friend: One of the best ways to learn is by teaching! Tell another parent about the 10-foot rule and then agree to work on it together for one week.

Rewards: Make a deal with yourself that if you practice the 10-foot rule for week you can go to Tully’s and get coffee or buy flowers for yourself or just give yourself a big gold star in your mind! Rewards are wonderful!!!!