



## Expectations: How High Do I Set the Bar for My Kids?

### KNOW YOUR CHILD:

- Setting expectations are primarily about my child, not myself, and certainly not the neighbor's kids.
- Taking the time to reflect on how my child learns and plays, as well as how quickly he or she adapts to change is vital.
- Understanding my child's threshold of frustration and her ability to share feelings is helpful.
- Important also is my child's sense of fun. What is it that creates joy in my child and motivates him to achieve?

### KNOW YOURSELF:

- Realizing that we put much energy into our kids, we need to be able to step back and examine whether the expectations we have for our kids are more about us rather than them. *Just because I am good at something or like something is not a given that this is the best for my child.*

### KNOW WHAT IS AGE APPROPRIATE:

- Learning how children mature and what stages all kids go through will help us to gage whether we are realistic.
- We need to keep in mind that books and charts that give information about ages and stages are averages and should only be used to determine if our child is "in the ballpark."

---

Once I have considered the above, it is time to exercise the 3 Rs of setting expectations:

## Reasonable. Realistic. Responsible.

*Reasonable:* In simple terms, does this make sense for my child?

*Realistic:* Knowing my child as I do, will my child have a good chance at success?  
(*This does not imply that it has to be easy and without a struggle, but the level of frustration needs to be kept as low as possible.*)

*Responsible:* Are the risks (physical, mental, emotional) worth it for my child?