Get everyone to join in
Suggest that as you all live under one roof, you need to agree rules for everyone. If a child won't join in you can point out that they will miss the chance to have their say, and that rules will be agreed that will apply to them too.

Talk about how you want to feel in the family
Encourage everyone to share their ideas

Share problem behaviour
Ask everyone to talk freely – without fault-finding and blaming – about issues the family could improve.

Share ideas for rules
Identify issues you would all like to have as rules in your family. For every behaviour you do not want, think of a behaviour you would like instead. Fill in the practice sheet “Our Family Rules” as you go along, and then produce your own colourful version.

Keep the rules simple and specific
Rules need to be clear, easy to understand, and realistic. Avoid rules such as “Do be good – Don’t be naughty” or “Do be happy – Don’t be sad/angry”.

Decide on a reward and a penalty for each rule
For family rules such as “Do talk nicely to each other – Don’t shout”, children will accept the rule more readily if parents respect it too, and agree to a suitable reward and penalty for themselves. Let children as well as adults suggest rewards and penalties.

Limit family rules
A maximum of four or five rules is plenty. Keeping the list short will help everyone remember the rules and practise them.

Drop and add new rules when needed
Rules are not cast in concrete. When something is no longer a problem, have a rule-dropping party!

Steps for Making Family Rules