

Value Every KidIdeas for Parents

Why Boundaries and Expectations Make a Difference

Boundaries are important to our children because they give clear messages about what is expected. Every day young people face many options and choices. Without boundaries to guide them, they may feel unsure and confused—and make unhealthy decisions. With boundaries, they have the supports that help them choose wisely and grow up healthy. Expectations also make a difference in children's lives. Having teachers and parents who expect them to do their best is important for children. For example, research shows that regardless of ability level, young people's scholastic achievement tends to be higher in classes where teachers have high expectations. When parents and teachers set high, yet realistic, expectations, children strive to do well.

Setting Limits through the Years Ways to Set and Uphold Boundaries for Your Child

0-1 yrs

- Know that children at this age do not intentionally violate standards.
- Distract your child from inappropriate behaviours and draw attention to appropriate ones.

2-3 yrs

- Enforce boundaries consistently.
- Give simple, understandable boundaries, such as "Don't bite" or "Be quiet."
- Calmly repeat simple rules when children do not follow them.

4-5 yrs

- Don't just tell your child what and what not to do. Demonstrate appropriate ways of behaving.
- Learn to set limits and offer your child choices.

6-10 yrs

- Be firm about safety boundaries.
- Be consistent with the consequences for violating boundaries.

11-15 yrs

- Negotiate new boundaries as your child grows older.
- Be patient, calm, and consistent as young adolescents test the boundaries you set.

16-18 yrs

- Explain your reasons for the limits you set.
- Help your teenager think about future goals, and the discipline and boundaries required to reach them.

Boundaries and Expectations

The more your child has clear, consistent boundaries and high expectations, the more likely he or she is to grow up healthy.

"The word no carries a lot more meaning when spoken by a parent who also knows how to say yes."

- Joyce Maynard

Tips that make boundaries easier:

- ★ Discuss boundaries with teachers, coaches, employers, clergy, and adults in other places where your child goes so that all boundaries are consistent.
- ★ When you are unsure about setting and enforcing boundaries, seek advice from another parent or a teacher.
- ★ Involve your children in family meetings to discuss boundaries and what happens when boundaries are violated.
- ★ Think of boundaries as something positive rather than something negative!

The 4 Cs of Boundaries and Expectations

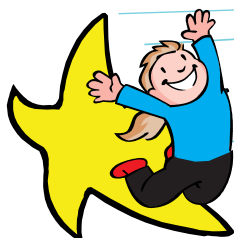
- Clear** — Everyone should know what to expect.
- Consistent** — Standards are more likely to be honoured when you uphold them.
- Creative** — Kids respond better when boundaries are clever and creative.
- Confident** — Expectations empower when you say, "I know you can do this."

Youth Speak

- "Expect me to be a good student and to do things right."
- "Help me grow to be an individual."
- "Challenge me to succeed and comfort me when I fail."

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VALUE EVERY KID

Raising healthy, caring, responsible children

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