

Your Kids Have Boundaries, Too

1. Why do children need their own boundaries? **It teaches them how to have healthy limits as adults and diminishes misbehavior by meeting their need for independence, control, and capability.**

Healthy- No one else should have authority over ourselves or our things. Repeated overstepped boundaries teaches that others' needs are more important than our own and can lead to abuse, manipulation, control.

Less Misbehavior- All children have a need for their own boundaries because it provides us with independence, a feeling of capability, and a sense of control. When someone is overstepping our boundaries repeatedly, it feels like power-over and/or disrespect. A healthy reaction is to push back (actively or passively) or hurt back which can look like fighting, defying, rebelling, resisting, retaliating, or getting revenge.

2. How can I use boundaries effectively? **With a balance of maintaining safety and order in the home while also respecting everyone's rights and freedoms.**

**Everyone should have and enforce boundaries for THEIR things:
objects, space, time, body, self-respect**

Strategies:

- **Give choices** early for things that aren't a health or safety issue and aren't infringing on your or others' boundaries; let them have some freedom, self-expression, and control.
- If you are seeing power-seeking behavior, then it's time to **give them more responsibility** in that area.
- **Allow mistakes, failures, and imperfect actions** as they learn to be more independent.

3. HOMEWORK!

1. Is there a certain time your child shows power-seeking behavior? Can you allow them more independence, space, choice, or control over that area of their life?

2. If you are nervous to give more independence to your child, get curious with yourself- why? Is it a legitimate health or safety reason? Is it overstepping others' boundaries? Or is it something you are trying to control because it makes you uncomfortable in some way (often it's their mistakes, failure, or imperfect actions)? See if you can find a baby step toward letting go in this area.