Parent Pages

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Welcome to the latest edition of Parent Pages, '**Boundaries that Build**'. Children push boundaries, test patience and argue back, this is all (unfortunately) a very normal part of growing up. Children naturally experiment with how far they can push before we give in. If we always give in, they will always push. If we can **consistently** hold firm with our boundaries, they will know, not only where we stand, but where they stand as well. This enables them to feel safe, secure and supported. If the goalposts are moving, it may feel like a game of cat and mouse, resulting in everyone feeling stress and frazzled! Research tells us that children who have clear, consistent rules are calmer, feel more secure and learn to control their behaviour themselves (although this is over time).

Boundaries not only provide clear expectations, they help children understand what is acceptable and teach valuable life skills such as respect and responsibility whilst supporting emotional regulation. Our children may get upset when we tell them "no", that does not mean we are doing something wrong. We need to role model remaining calm and be consistent and predictable, even when they find the boundaries difficult to accept.

If you feel you may need further support with this, or any other parenting topic, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below.

Best wishes,
Katie Kirby,
Family Support Worker



Parent Focus - Boundaries that Build



You may think it will be impossible to establish new boundaries with your child at this point in their lives, which is simply not true. It may not be easy but it is never too late to install and establish boundaries with your children. Get them involved to enable them to understand the 'whats and whys' of it all. Don't forget boundaries will also continue to evolve and change as children grow and seek more independence and freedom. Remember, everybody who looks after your children should be using the same rules and being consistent, particularly in the beginning when you are trying to get boundaries established.

Boundaries are just as important for neurodivergent children as neurotypical children. In fact, clear, predictable boundaries can be reassuring for children who find change, transition, uncertainty, social situations and managing emotions challenging. As previously mentioned; boundaries can help to create a sense of safety, as well as reducing anxiety and supporting children to understand expectations whilst developing their independence. However, it is important to recognise that some children may need additional time, support and/or adjustments to understand and follow these boundaries. It might help to use visual reminders, simple language and routines or extra processing time. Having a neurodivergent brain does not mean that children should be without boundaries, it means we may need to adapt how we communicate and support them so that expectations are accessible, fair and appropriate to their individual needs. This is especially crucial when there are siblings who may accuse you of favouritism, for allowing another child to 'get away' with things. As well as explaining that a neurodivergent brain works differently, you can then explain to a sibling that they are following the expectations /rules but need certain adaptations to be made to support them to achieve it. Every child is different and therefore every family will have different rules and boundaries to suit them and their needs.

Often parents do not know where to start when creating boundaries. As a starting point think of what is most important to you and what it is your children are wanting to achieve for example: your child wants to play online with friends; the most important thing to you is keeping your child safe online. Rather than giving an outright "no" could you allow them to achieve their goal whilst also achieving yours, by putting some simple boundaries in place? What will those boundaries look like for your family? It may be you turn off the chat function and they are only allowed to play with people they know in real life. It may be you sit next to them whilst they play, or you play online with them as well.

Some other top tips to try when installing boundaries in your home are:

- Be clear and consistent ensure to set **clear, age-appropriate expectations** (using age appropriate language) and explain the reasons behind them so children understand what is expected to guarantee they can achieve what is being asked of them;
- Communicate with **kindness** - listen to your children's feelings, ask their opinion and be ready to discuss the reasons for these boundaries to encourage open, respectful conversations;
- Lead by example - model healthy boundaries by **respecting** personal space, **managing** emotions calmly and treating others with respect;
- Encourage independence and responsibility - offer choices where appropriate, praise positive behaviour and **follow through calmly and consistently when boundaries are challenged.**

We can be kind and understanding while still maintaining firm and consistent boundaries. The aim is not to prevent our children from experiencing frustration or disappointment, but to help them learn how to manage these feelings with the support of the trusted adults around them. We need to think ahead to their adulthood and understand our children will feel disappointment, rejection, sadness, frustration and anger as they grow. It is better (and safer!) that they learn this whilst they are younger and have us to help them navigate those feelings and offer them strategies to manage them. If their first taste of those big feelings as an adult they may be completely clueless on how to manage them resulting in more difficulties. Setting boundaries is not about controlling children; it is about helping them develop self-discipline, responsibility and respect for themselves and others. Small, consistent steps at home can make a big difference!

If you would like to know more about establishing boundaries for your children click here 'How to set limits on your child's behaviour and stick to them' from NHS Lothian.

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Local events and places to visit...

In addition to these there are other events so it is also certainly worth googling to find some further ideas but to get you started why not consider the below, click the images or links for more information.











Quick reference family support & helplines....

Useful websites...

If you find yourself needing support click the links below for information you may find useful:

⇒ Family Toolbox

⇒ Relate

⇒ Our Family Wizard

Helpline... ChatHealth

ChatHealth is a confidential text support service for parents, carers, families and young people in Hampshire. Trained local nurses will be on hand to respond to your messages and are experienced in a wide range of health and wellbeing concerns you may have. As well as giving advice, the team can signpost to appropriate services. Any text sent outside opening hours will receive an automated message with advice of where to get help if their question is urgent. Out-of-hours texts will be replied to within one working day. For urgent medical enquires, please call 999 or 111.

Text 07507 332417 Lines are open Monday - Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm (exc. bank holidays). Alternatively visit their website: ChatHealth

App Recommendation of the Month... Raising Kids with Love and Boundaries

Click here for Spotify

Click here for Amazon Music



Click here for Apple Podcasts

Hosted by Camilla McGill, a seasoned parenting coach with over two decades of experience, "Raising Kids with Love and Boundaries" is a podcast for navigating the challenges and joys of raising children aged 2-12.

Drawing from her own journey raising four children and extensive work with parents, Camilla offers practical advice and compassionate guidance. Each episode is crafted to provide actionable insights in a warm, non-judgmental tone, to learn practical, evidence-based tools and tips.

If you have any suggestions for topics or content for these pages in the future, please do not hesitate to drop me an email and I will do my best to include requests.