

Common Questions

Q: What age can I start setting limits?

A: Age 3+

Q: What if I set a limit and my child doesn't listen?

A: Practice and consistency is key with limit setting. The more you provide choices for your children the more they will get used to the concept that they have responsibility and consequences for their choices.

Videos

Limit Setting Video English



Vídeo de Establecimiento de Límites Español



PLAY THERAPY
RESOURCE.com

Created by M.S. Counseling students in the course, Play and Art in Therapy with Children, at California State University, Sacramento.



Additional Resources

Book

- *Mindful discipline: A loving approach to setting limits & raising an emotionally intelligent child* by Shauna Shapiro, PhD and Chris White, MD

Podcast

- Play Therapy Parenting S2E6 – Limit Setting: The Third “Pillar” of Play Therapy Parenting

References

Landreth, G. L. (2024). *Play therapy: The art of the relationship, Theory and Application of Child-Centered Play Therapy* (4th ed.). Routledge.

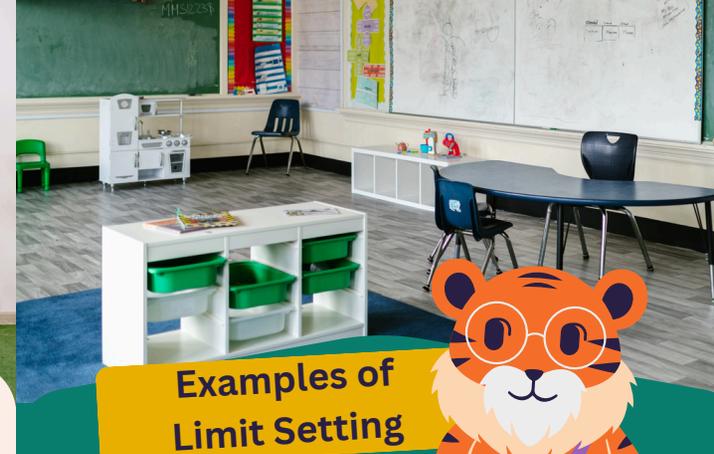
Purswell, K. E. (2020). An exploration of limit-setting in child counseling. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling*, 6(3), 228–241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23727810.2020.1835410>

Limit Setting with Children



I choose





Research Supporting Limit Setting



Examples of Limit Setting



Why Set a Limit?

Setting limits helps facilitate a sense of responsibility and fosters growth in children.

How to Set a Limit

Use the **ACT method**

Acknowledge the child's feeling

Communicate the limit

Target two alternative choices for the child to choose from

Reason #1

Security

Boundaries and limits help children feel more secure and following rules makes their lives more predictable.

Reason #2

Responsibility

Children learn to take responsibility for their own actions rather than relying on adults to enforce behavior.

Reason #3

Boundaries

Children gain the opportunity to understand and respect boundaries from an early age.

Example #1

"I know you are feeling creative, but the walls are not for painting. You can **choose** to paint the paper or you can **choose** to paint the clay."



Example #2

"I know you are feeling frustrated, but your brother is not for pinching. You can **choose** to pinch the stuffed animal or you can **choose** to punch this pillow."



Example #3

"I know you are feeling playful, but my reading glasses are not playing with. You can **choose** to play with your sunglasses or you can **choose** to play with the toys in the living room."

