

# TEACHING YOUNG CHILDREN ABOUT HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Childhood is a critical time for parents to teach their children about healthy boundaries and consent. It is important that children learn that they have a choice in what happens to and around their body and how to respect others.

- **Ask before touching your child.** If they say “no”, accept their decision without being upset. This shows them you respect their decisions about their body.
- **Ask before posting a picture of them online or sharing something about them with someone else.** This shows them they have the right to decide which information is shared about them and how.
- **If your child tells you to stop (tickling, hugging, etc.), do so immediately.** Do not continue and then stop. This teaches them that they have the right to withdraw their permission for any action at any time.
- **Demonstrate that absence of a verbal “no” does not mean “yes”.** If you ask them something and they do not reply, do not take their lack of response as a “yes”. Assume that the answer is “no” unless they say otherwise.
- **If something has to happen, try to give them choices about how it will happen.** Example: “Would you like me to help you change into your pajamas, or do you want to do it yourself?” This way, you can still teach your child about boundaries even when there is something that they have to do.
- **Talk to your family members about respecting your child’s boundaries and listening when your child says “no” to anything.**

Healthy boundaries begin with you. Modeling healthy boundaries is one of the best ways to instill them in your child. For more information, contact [prevention@canyoncreekservices.org](mailto:prevention@canyoncreekservices.org) or visit [www.canyoncreekservices.org](http://www.canyoncreekservices.org).



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# TEACHING PRE-TEENS AND TEENS ABOUT HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

In the teenage and pre-teenage years, teaching healthy relationship skills can be a daunting task. However, it is also incredibly important as this is the time when young people begin to form habits that will last their entire lifetime.

- Teach your child that only “yes” means “yes”. Remind them that the absence of a verbal “no” does not mean “yes”.
- Emphasize that **EVERYONE** has a responsibility to respect others’ boundaries.
- Talk about how to deal with receiving a “no”. Teach them how to handle rejection by having them consider the other person’s point of view. How would they want someone else to react to a “no” from them?
- No matter what their relationship is with another person, they still have to respect boundaries. For example, even if they are dating someone, they still need to ask before holding their hand or hugging them.
- Let them know that if a situation feels wrong or unsafe, it probably is.
- If you are having trouble finding the words when talking to your teen about boundaries, do some research. [LovelsRespect.org](https://www.LovelsRespect.org) is a great resource you and your teen/pre-teen can explore together.
- Discuss the importance of talking to a trusted adult if someone has violated their boundaries. Talk to them about how telling a trusted adult if something happens can help keep them safe.

Start by having frequent conversations with your child, and make sure to model healthy boundaries in your own life! For more information, contact [prevention@canyoncreekservices.org](mailto:prevention@canyoncreekservices.org) or visit [www.canyoncreekservices.org](http://www.canyoncreekservices.org).



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