



Building the Boundaries-and-Expectations Assets

All young people need to know their limits as well as what's expected of them. Here are ideas on how to build the six Boundaries-and-Expectations assets for children and youth at different ages:

Ages Birth to 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Realize that babies don't intentionally violate standards and boundaries. Don't punish them for violating boundaries they can't understand.• Distract children from inappropriate behavior and draw attention to how you want them to act.
Ages 1 to 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give simple, understandable boundaries, such as, "Sit down," or "Don't bite."• Enforce boundaries consistently so children don't get confused.• Affirm children when they act appropriately.
Ages 3 to 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay calm when children act out in highly emotional ways.• Model how you want children to act; don't just tell them what to do and what not to do.• Learn what to expect from preschoolers. Read about child development in books and magazines, talk to other parents, or talk to preschool teachers or child-care workers.
Ages 6 to 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage schools, neighbors, organizations, and communities to have consistent boundaries and consequences so children know how to act in different settings.• Be firm about boundaries that keep kids safe. Don't negotiate these boundaries.• Challenge children to do their best in school, and help them whenever you can.
Ages 12 to 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be patient, calm, and consistent as young teenagers test the boundaries you set.• Negotiate new boundaries as children grow older. Work together on what's acceptable and what's not.• Ask young people where they are going and who they will be with.
Ages 16 to 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help teenagers think about their goals for the future and what kind of boundaries they'll need to meet them.• Continue to have boundaries for appropriate behaviors and consequences for violating those boundaries.• Respect teenagers' privacy needs while showing interest in their friends and activities.• Challenge teenagers to do their best in school and other activities.