



5 Steps to Establishing Healthy Boundaries

In order to establish healthy boundaries between yourself and your child:

1. Identify the symptoms of your boundaries currently being, or having been, violated or ignored. Some symptoms to look for are anger, resentment, frustration, feeling powerless, or feeling hopeless.

Example: "My child sleeps through the alarm and I'm sick and tired of the hectic morning rush that results."

2. Take responsibility for your own upsets. Identify the irrational or unhealthy thinking and beliefs which are fueling any high drama (anger, frustration, anxiety, sadness) you are experiencing over the behaviors.
3. Identify new, more rational healthy thinking and beliefs. Rational healthy thinking will lead to less anger and frustration in your life and put you in a better position to communicate your boundaries: calmly, clearly, and consistently.

Example: "Rather than staying quiet in order to avoid conflict, I will stand up for myself so that my child can learn to respect my rights and my needs in the relationship."

4. Identify any new skills you want to work on in order to sustain healthy boundaries between you and your child. The key word there is "sustain". Like fences, personal boundaries require maintenance.
5. Implement healthy boundary-building behaviors and beliefs in your life.

Healthy Boundary-Building Behaviors:

Managing the need for approval, managing fear of rejection, improving assertive communication skills, developing self-control, setting goals

Healthy Boundary-Building Beliefs:

I have the right to ask for what I want.
I have the right to have my needs and wants respected by others.
I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
I have the right to be happy.
I have the right to express all of my feelings: positive or negative.
I have the right to follow my own values and standards.
I have the right not to be responsible for others' behaviors, actions, feelings, or problems.

I have the right to expect honesty from others.
I have the right not to give excuses or reasons for my behavior.
I have the right to make decisions based on my feelings.
I have the right to be in a non-abusive environment.
I have the right to feel safe in my own home.

Material adapted from: SMART Recovery Family & Friends Handbook, 2012 p. 114