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| mhy3q4ba[1]**BRINGING OUT THE BEST** | SETTING•LIMITS |
| *We set limits for young children in order to teach them self-control. Children need different limits at different ages because they have different skills. With repetition and practice, children will internalize the limits and no longer need reminders from parents and teachers.***Some general guidelines:**1. The limits you set need to be age appropriate.
2. Children need lots of practice and repetition before they learn a limit.
3. Children will “test” or try out your limit at first.
4. Start with ONE new limit at a time.
5. ACT…don’t explain.
6. BE CONSISTENT!

**TRY THESE STRATEGIES:**1. **Be specific and clear**

“Behave yourself” and “Be a good boy” don’t mean much to a young child. Instead, communicate what you want him to do.For example: Say “While we are in the store, we will use our walking feet” or “Use your fork when you eat” or “Keep the sand in the sandbox”. 1. **Be simple and to the point**

Make sure that you are setting a limit and not explaining too much. Often children become overwhelmed with too many words and stop listening. Say the most important information first and state it simply.For example: Say “While we are in the store, you can look at the toys with your eyes, but your hands stay in your pockets” or “When you are mad at Madison, use your words to tell her you are mad”.1. **Offer choices when possible**

For example: Say “You can have cheerios or granola for breakfast. Which one do you want?” or “It’s time to clean up. Do you want to clean up the blocks first or the puzzles?” or “You have two choices, you may walk beside me or hold my hand, but running away is NOT a choice”. 1. **State directions positively**

Avoid negative words like “don’t” and “stop”.For example: Say “Keep your food on your plate” instead of “Don’t throw your food” or “Use your inside voice” instead of “Stop yelling”. 1. **Offer alternatives for unacceptable behavior**

For example: Say “Jumping on the bed is not safe. You can jump outside in the grass” or “Throwing sand is not allowed. You can throw a ball instead”. 1. **Only ask questions when you can accept the child’s answer**

For example: Say “You will need to pick up your blocks before we eat snack” instead of “Can you pick up your blocks?” or “It’s time for bed. Tell everyone goodnight.” instead of “Are you ready for bed?”1. **Avoid wishy-washy words**

For example: Say “It’s time to take your bath” instead of “Maybe you should take a bath now” or “When your toys are picked up, we can play outside” instead of “It would be nice if you put your toys away”.1. **Replace authoritarian words**

For example: Say “The rule is no throwing balls in the house” instead of “I SAID no throwing balls in the house”. |