



HENRY FORD
DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS



Boundaries and Consent

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We begin to teach children about boundaries at a young age. However, rarely do parents allow their children to set boundaries when it comes to their interactions with adults. Sometimes, children are also not allowed to have privacy in their personal space, like their bedroom.

During a time when social distancing is a requirement for us to stay safe, parents and children are home together more than ever. Sometimes the space at home may not allow for much privacy. A shared bedroom with siblings or a living space with extended family members can cause anyone to feel a bit overwhelmed, especially children.

It's important that a child feels comfortable saying no when they don't like something, such as when they do not want to hug or kiss a family member or friend. It is also important to respect the boundaries that a child may establish when it comes to their space and belongings, always keeping their safety in consideration.

Below are some steps that parents can take to begin allowing their children to establish their own personal boundaries:

- Unless you fear for their safety, do not go through their belongings including their room, journals, or phone. Invading privacy without reason sends a message that you do not value their boundaries or trust their judgement. This may do more harm to your relationship and push them away.
- Do not share details of your child's personal life on social media without their permission, especially things that they have asked you not to share with anyone.
- Consider their feelings. While they are children, they have thoughts and feelings that should be considered when making decisions that affect them.
- Knock on doors before entering rooms. Especially as they start to get older and their bodies start to change. Being seen without clothing can be traumatic for some youth.

Earning your child's trust is vital in making sure they feel comfortable coming to you in times when they need guidance or advice. As always, these are only suggestions. If at any point you are concerned about your child's health or safety, intervene as you see fit.