

*Parenting Tools:*  
**Setting Boundaries**



**HOME**  
*22.6*

## **Parenting Tools:** *Setting Boundaries*

### **Why do we set boundaries?**

We set limits because we love our children. Setting these limits in a loving way from the very beginning will help our children develop a sense of responsibility and self-control that will serve them throughout their lives. Proverbs 29:17 tells us, “Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.”

### **Why is it important to set boundaries for toddlers?**

Your toddler needs consistency. If you’re consistent, it will help your child learn how to behave. Of course, no toddler can behave all the time. There will be many times you will have to say “no” when your child is misbehaving or in danger of getting hurt. Parents need to agree when to say no. If you and your spouse were brought up with different parenting styles, you will need to discuss and agree on parenting your child. An important verse for helping you and your spouse find agreement on a parenting style is Joshua 24:15, “...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

### **Why is it important to set clear boundaries?**

Being clear about what’s allowed encourages toddlers to think before acting, so they learn to control their impulses on their own. Proverbs 3:6 tells us, “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

## Do's & Don'ts of Setting Boundaries

### DO

- Pick your battles—Set rules you feel you need to enforce, but keep them to a reasonable number.
- Be direct—Redirection works well with toddlers. They have little control over their impulses and might not grasp why you are saying no. They may need to be moved into another room or to another activity.
- Be consistent—Make sure you stick to the rules you establish. If you make an exception, explain why.
- Be patient—Toddlers do forget and will repeat misbehavior. Remember, God is good and will give us patience if we ask.

### DON'T

- Give in or waiver—Instead, let your child know that you are serious and there will be consequences if the behavior does not change. You have to follow through so your child knows you mean business the next time he/she misbehaves.
- Dictate—Instead, give your child acceptable choices. This gives your child a sense of control and minimizes meltdowns.
- Criticize—Instead respond with love. Criticizing can hurt your child's self-confidence.
- Lose your temper—Instead, remember to stay calm, and ask God for wisdom in dealing with your child. Always explain what he or she did wrong. Your goal is to teach your child correct behavior with a loving spirit.

- Constantly say “no”—If you say this too many times, it will lose its effectiveness.