

3 Steps to Set Healthy Limits

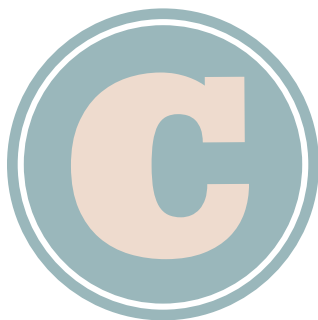
Dr. Garry Landreth, founder of the Center for Play Therapy, developed this 3-step process to help parents better communicate limits to their children in a way their children can understand.



Acknowledge the feeling.

- What is your child feeling?
- Identify the feeling or desire your child is experiencing.
- This creates connection and communicates understanding.
- It helps the child feel seen and validated.

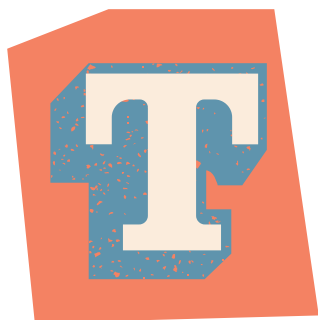
Example: "You love to draw and color!"



Communicate the limit.

- Let your child know that their behavior is not okay.
- Be specific.
- Stay away from blaming or labeling.
- Stay away from "always" and "never."

Example: "The wall is not for drawing and coloring."



Target acceptable alternatives.

- Provide your child with acceptable alternative ways to express their feelings.
- If revisited long after the incident, you can brainstorm with them alternative options.

Example: "You can draw on this piece of paper instead."