



Safe and Healthy Boundaries

All people have the right to safe and healthy relationships. Sometimes that means having boundaries. Boundaries are informal rules that people set up to be respectful and non-intrusive. We all have boundaries and should respect other people's boundaries. An example of a boundary is not entering someone's personal space, shaking hands instead of hugging, and not asking about personal things like weight. It's important that children learn about boundaries from an early age so that they do not get hurt and they do not hurt other people.



WHAT MY CHILD NEEDS TO KNOW

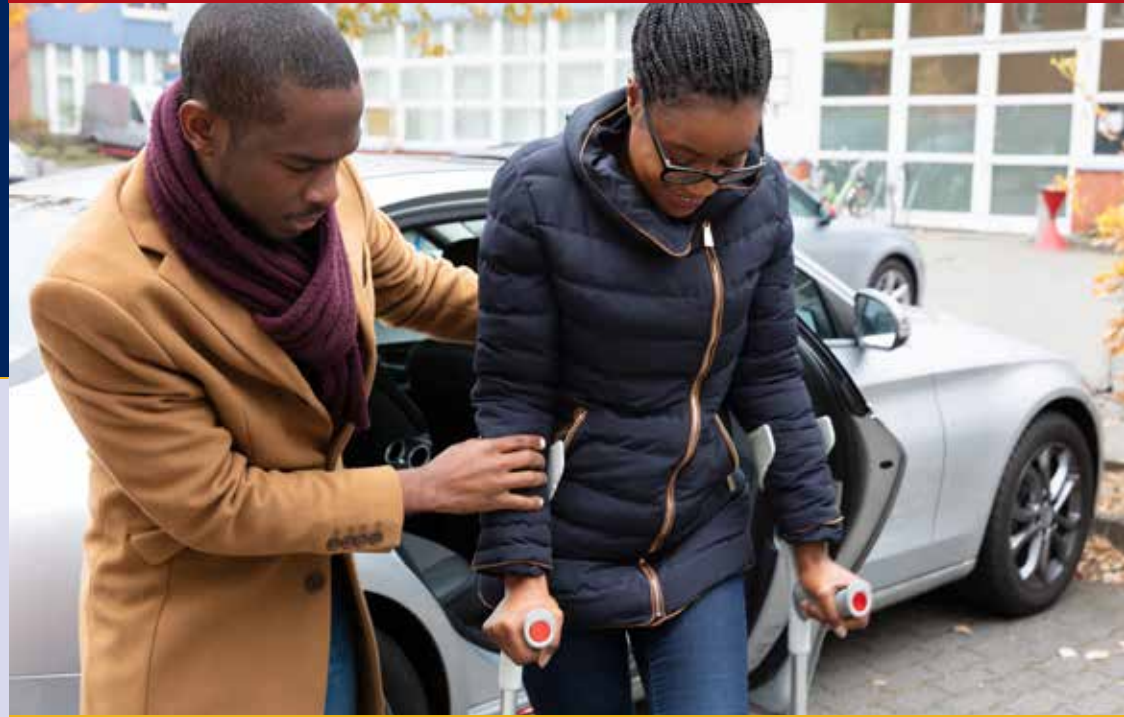
1. You need to respect boundaries and ask before touching or moving into another person's space. You should always ask and get a "YES" response before you touch the person.
2. Different types of touches are used in different situations and with different people in our lives. For example, you may hug your mom, but you don't hug the doctor or a stranger.
3. You can set boundaries. You have the right to say NO to touch or sexual behavior that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe. That includes behavior from family members, friends,

TIPS FOR TEACHING YOUR CHILD ABOUT SAFE AND HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

1. Ask your child probing questions to figure out how much they know and understand about boundaries.
2. Role-play or write social stories using scenarios of appropriate and inappropriate touching in different situations. Include scenarios that focus on non-verbal signals as well. If your child moves to hug someone and they back away, your child should back off and respect that boundary.
3. If you are watching TV or a movie, take advantage of that to talk about what is happening on the screen between two consenting (or non-consenting) adults. Reinforce that NO means NO.

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What my child needs to know continued...

romantic partners, teachers, and other community members, including strangers.

4. You can say YES to touching or sexual behavior that you want to engage in and that is safe. But first, you need to learn about sex and how and when to decide that you are ready for sex. This includes talking about STIs, pregnancy, and emotional readiness.
5. Listen to your gut when it comes to sexual or other physical touches. If it seems or feels wrong, you should say NO, attempt to leave, and tell a trusted adult.

Tips for teaching your child about safe and healthy boundaries continued...

4. Talk to your child about sex and that there are boundaries even between romantic partners. Explain that a romantic partner may want to engage in sexual activity that makes the other partner uncomfortable. Let them know they can set a boundary and say no.
5. Be sure to listen to your child if they come to you to share issues or if they start acting differently after spending time with someone, even family members. Ask questions and be sure that your child knows that they can tell you anything.
6. Explain to your child that everyone has different boundaries and practice their response to someone saying yes and someone saying no.
7. Be a role model for your child. Ask them before you hug or kiss them and ask family members to do the same. This helps them understand boundaries and body rights.