

Developing Independence in 3 - 5 year olds



**I Can Do It
Myself**



Setting effective boundaries so your child knows what they can and can't do.

'CHANGE'
Is going to be hard, but that doesn't mean it isn't worth it!

You may read information in this booklet that will change the way you parent. Please make sure you think about the approaches you are going to use beforehand, talk to the other parents/carers involved and remember that it will be hard, but it is worth it!

3 and 4 year olds are testing out their independence skills all the time. They like to think they are miniature adults. Our job is to help them find independence in the safety of our boundaries.

Boundaries are making agreements about what is acceptable and what is not.

Boundaries are clear and consistent limits set with love and respect.



This is one of the hardest parts of parenting but the impact will be huge for you and your child.

What are the benefits of setting and using boundaries for me and my child?

- They support everyone's well being
- They will help your child develop an understanding of healthy relationships
- They are crucial to help your child learn that this is how life works
- They may help your child's growth and development such as managing time, making decisions, being resilient

TOP TIPS

Top tips:

1. Be a team - make sure everyone you are parenting with follows the same boundaries
2. Be consistent - if you put a boundary in place, stick to it (no matter how tired or busy you are)
3. Make the instructions short and simple and be specific in your language, e.g 'please can you pick up your toys and put them in the box.'
4. Make these boundaries as positive as possible - avoid telling your child 'stop...' or 'don't...' and tell them what you want them to do.
5. Pick a few boundaries to start with and do them well before adding anymore

Approaches to help you with using boundaries effectively.

WHEN - THEN

The **WHEN-THEN** technique is simply a different way of approaching what would normally result in power struggles and yelling.

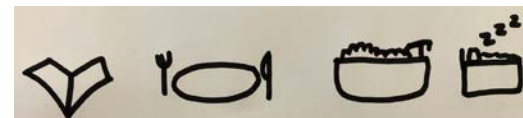
"WHEN you put your toys in the box, **THEN** you can have 10 minutes of screen time."

"WHEN you get dressed, **THEN** you can go outside and play."

Using the consistent and reliable script will enable you to stay calm and hold your ground.

Using visual timetables

These are really helpful for your child to look at and follow so they know what to expect at different times of the day.



Giving choices

Giving children choices provides them with opportunities to use their voices, make decisions, develop ownership, and solve problems. They are also a great way to bond with them too.

Examples of giving choices:

You want your child to: have a bath

The choice you give: would you like me to help you get in the bath or would you like to get in by yourself?

You want your child to: tidy their toys

The choice you give: would you like to put the teddies away first or the cars?

Your child will make the choice but they are still completing the task you wanted them to do.



Always remember to praise your child for following the boundaries you set. They need to know they have done the right thing!