

BOUNDARY BUILDER FRAMEWORK

A simple guide to creating boundaries that protect connection, safety, and your sanity.

1. Start With the Challenge

What behavior, pattern, or moment keeps repeating?

Write it clearly and without judgment.

Prompt:

“What’s the moment where I feel myself losing patience or bending my limit?”

My challenge is:

2. Identify the Need Behind the Behavior

Kids don’t push boundaries to be “bad” — they push because there’s an unmet need or undeveloped skill.

Check any that fit:

- ☐ They need help with transitions
- ☐ They are tired/hungry/overstimulated
- ☐ They need connection
- ☐ They need clearer instructions
- ☐ They need a body-safe outlet (movement, sensory, expression)
- ☐ They don’t understand the expectation
- ☐ They need co-regulation
- ☐ They need more support or skill-building

Notes:

3. What Is *Your* Boundary Here? (Your Fence)

A boundary is *your limit* and *your action*, not a demand on your child.

Ask yourself:

"What will *I* do to create safety, clarity, or follow-through?"

Complete the sentence:

My boundary is: "I am willing / not willing to _____."

Example:

"I will move when you hit."

"I will not drive when there is yelling."

"I will pause play when toys are used in unsafe ways."

My boundary:

4. Inside the Fence: The "YES Zone"

Kids need to know what *is allowed* just as much as what's not.

What CAN your child do instead?

(List 2–5 acceptable, safe options)

The YES Zone:

1. _____
2. _____

3. _____
4. _____

Example (for interrupting):

- Tap my shoulder
- Write a note
- Say “excuse me”

Example (for hitting):

- Squeeze a pillow
- Stomp feet
- Ask for space
- Sit by me while feeling angry

5. Outside the Fence: Related or Natural Consequence

This is NOT a punishment.

This is simply what *happens* when behavior moves outside the fence.

Ask:

“What will happen when the unsafe/disrespectful behavior continues?”

Examples:

- “When toys are thrown, hard toys get put away for the day.”
- “When yelling happens in the car, I will pause driving until voices are respectful.”
- “When laundry isn’t folded on time, we will fold it after dinner before we resume our evening activities.”

My consequence:

6. Write Your Boundary Formula

Now combine it into one clear, simple script.

★ **Boundary Formula:**

1. When ____ happens...
2. I will/will not...
3. What's allowed is...
4. When it continues...

Write your full boundary below:

7. How Will I Hold This Boundary?

Holding the line requires calm, predictable follow-through.

What will help you stay grounded?

Check any that apply:

- ☐ Deep breath before responding
- ☐ Repeat the boundary quietly
- ☐ Lower my voice instead of raising it
- ☐ Simplify my language
- ☐ Regulate *my* body first
- ☐ Remove the audience (move closer or crouch down)
- ☐ Take a pause before coming back to it
- ☐ Remind myself "I can handle their feelings about the limit"

Other supports:

8. What Might Make Me Fold?

Folding isn't failure — it just means your capacity was low.

Possible triggers:

- ☐ Fatigue
- ☐ Guilt
- ☐ Overwhelm
- ☐ Partner disagreement
- ☐ Public pressure
- ☐ Unclear boundary
- ☐ Fear of meltdown

How I can adjust / support myself ahead of time:

9. Plan for Repair (If Needed)

If you lose your cool or fold — repair brings you right back to connection.

Script options:

- “I was unclear earlier because I was overwhelmed. Here’s the boundary, here’s what you can do ____. Which option works for you?”
- “I’m sorry I yelled. I was having trouble staying calm. You didn’t cause that. Let’s try again.”

My repair language:

10. Reflection

How will this boundary support:

- My child's safety?
- My child's skill building?
- My peace and clarity?