

In an initiative to serve the community in trying times, we bring to you a weekly series on topics that are relevant to our current lives within our homes.

SETTING LIMITS

Something that surprises an adult walking into a Montessori classroom is children going about their work without being shadowed by a hovering teacher. We see things being used appropriately, activities being wound up and placed back, respect of another's work, turn taking, courteous language, offering one's help when another needs it and all this without constantly being instructed to do so! Self-discipline is a process and can only emerge in an environment of freedom. But this freedom is not to do anything but everything that aids one's development without disrupting someone else's, like one is only free to move as long as they aren't running over another child's work, in which case they have to be stopped - immediately and every time. How can such limits be set at home?



- **Rules - Few, Fair and Consistent**

Children under 6 cannot be reasoned with. They need clear boundaries with all the adults in the environment following the same. For instance, if the rule is for food to be eaten at the table, everyone and at all times has to do the same and that becomes the way of life. As they get older we can have discussions if and why adults have certain privileges.

- **Choice - Limited and with Consequence**

Limit the items where the child has to choose and offer as many choices as the environment permits. Making choices and facing its consequences begins from choosing between an apple and a papaya for snack to making life decisions later on.

- **Language - Firm, Clear and Respectful**

Limits only work when set in a calm manner without anger and acknowledging the child's emotions; 'I understand that you are upset, but we are only buying what is on our shopping list'.

- **Follow Through - Always**

We cannot go back on our word because of an unleashing tantrum. For children to trust what we say, we have to act as we speak. Empty threats cause insecurities in the child as they can never figure if we mean what we say which only leads to more meltdowns.

We would like to thank all the parents who contributed to the newsletter!

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