

Teach These Children

Fivefold enrichment



Learning to Say No

Have you ever noticed how difficult it is for some people to decline an invitation or commitment without any excuse or explanation? Setting boundaries is an important part of emotional wellness. Learning to say no is an important skill we can teach children as a first step in setting boundaries.

Activity

Developing a comfortability around setting boundaries takes practice. In order for children to grow into healthy, assertive adults, we have to teach them to recognize and acknowledge their own feelings, not just those of others. Create opportunities for your child to tell you “no” when you know you are willing to accept the answer. In other words, “Michael, would you like to have lima beans for dinner?” When Michael responds, “no”, be sure to honor that. Don’t try to force him or convince him by telling him all the reasons why lima beans are good for his heart. In some instances this may be appropriate, but for this activity, we are specifically teaching how to recognize, and practice being comfortable setting boundaries. Practice saying no to them without giving a reason and ask how they feel. Are they able to accept that and why or why not? Your child’s level of comfortability setting boundaries begins with you letting them be comfortable in that space and having the conversations to help them understand why it’s okay for them and others to set boundaries.

TIPS

While we teach that you don’t have to have a reason to say, “no”, it is important to remember that tone matters- oftentimes its not what we say that matters but how we say it. Let’s teach our children to politely decline when necessary.



Child’s belief about self...

I am grounded

Family supports development of...

Wellness

Focus area:

Emotional wellness

GOAL

Help children set boundaries by learning to say, “no”.

LEVEL

3