

FITCHBURG COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS COALITION

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES THIS SEASON

December 2025 Newsletter

BOUNDARY CHECKLIST

TEACH CONSENT

Teach kids that they never have to hug, kiss, or sit with anyone who makes them uncomfortable (even family!)

CREATE A CHECK-IN PLAN

Plan ahead: let kids know to come to you/another trusted adult if they feel overwhelmed or unsure during events.

CONSISTENT ROUTINES

Sleep, meals, and quiet breaks should be consistent to prevent emotional overload.

INTENTIONAL SUPERVISION

Decide ahead of time who's watching young children, especially in busy homes or unfamiliar spaces. If older kids are alone, consider 15-minute check-ins.

AGE-APPROPRIATE LIMITS

Let kids know the plan, what's expected, and what support is available if they need help.

NORMALIZE "NO"

Model polite behavior but firm boundary-setting with extended family/friends.

MONITOR CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR

Irritability, withdrawal, clinginess, or regression can point to signs of discomfort or stress. Check in gently!

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

If a person or situation feels off, it's okay to step in, redirect, or leave!



ADDITIONAL DATA, RESOURCES & PREVENTION TOOLS CAN BE FOUND:

National Children's Alliance
The Mama Bear Effect
The Children's Trust
Stop it Now
RAINN



Happy Holidays Start with Healthy Boundaries



The holidays bring packed schedules, large gatherings, and shifting obligations. While this can be a joyous time, it can also add stress and sometimes, even create unsafe situations for children. By setting healthy boundaries, parents and caregivers can create predictable, safe spaces where kids can feel relaxed and enjoy time with family and friends. This month, we are sharing simple yet effective ways to put supportive limits in place that will help reduce stress, prevent harm, and support your children's well-being all season long.

Eliminate the pressures kids may feel to hug, kiss, or physically engage with relatives or family friends.

Modeling healthy boundaries teaches children that their comfort and body autonomy matter. Adults can support this by narrating clear, respectful responses to normalize consent. It also gives children the language to use in the moment.

Here are a few simple, supportive examples of how we can model healthy boundaries for children:

- "They don't want to hug - how about a wave or hello instead."
- "Do you want to hug, high-five, or just say hello? It's your choice."
- "We're learning to make decisions about our bodies, so if they're only comfortable with are a wave or smile, that is still polite."
- "Let's pause. Everyone should agree to touch & it's okay to say no."
- "Please check: 'Is it okay if I sit with you?' We ask first."
- "You can say, 'No thank you,' or 'I don't want to right now.'"
- "In our family, some like hugs, some don't - every choice is okay."
- "Let's give them space. Please ask before picking them up."