

Therapeutic Limit Setting: the basics of A.C.T. !

Therapeutic Limit Setting comes from Garry Landreth's CPRT 10 week parenting course. It was developed as a way to:

1. Focuses in on your child's potential by empowering them to make their own choices
2. Helps your child understand: CHOICES, DECISION MAKING, CONSEQUENCES, FRUSTRATION, & CONFIDENCE.
3. Gives parents a way to remain calm and in control of situations:
 - a. **CONSISTENCY IS IMPORTANT:** The more you use this language the faster your child will understand/learn what limits and choices are
 - b. By using the same script, regardless of the situation, the adult is able to remain more calm because they are not scrambling to find the words to address the situation.

What does ACT stand for?

- **A = Acknowledge the Feeling**
 - This allows the child to learn that his feelings, desires, wishes are VALID & ACCEPTED by you
 - Reflecting the feeling often diffuses the intensity of the feeling or need
 - **Start your statement with YOU:**
 - "YOU really want to keep playing."
 - "YOU'RE hungry."
 - Be sure that your voice is sincere & conveys understanding
- **C = Communicate the Limit**
 - Be specific, clear, & brief
 - "It's time to clean up."
 - "You can have a snack before dinner."
- **T = Target the Alternative**
 - Provide 1 or 2 CHOICES to help the child move on to the next step
 - "It's your CHOICE. Do you CHOOSE to clean up the cars or the blocks? Which do you CHOOSE?"
 - "It's your CHOICE. Do you CHOOSE to have apple slices or grapes? Which do you CHOOSE?"
 - Use your body to "target" where or what you are offering as choices
 - When you offer choices, be sure to remain calm and impartial. Since you are giving them 2 choices that you are OK with, be sure not to over emphasize one choice over the other.
 - "You can CHOOSE THIS ONE or you can choose this one." If you over emphasize one choice over the other or if your tone implies which one you want them to choose, you run the risk of a power struggle and your child may choose the "other" choice just to get a reaction.
- **Repeat up to THREE times**
 - Count silently to 15 or 30 before repeating ACT (give the same choices)
 - After giving your choices, give them time to make a choice. Your body language during this time should be open, not hovering.

Rules of Thumb:

- Be a Thermostat not a thermometer*
 - Learn to Respond instead of Reacting
- When your child is drowning, don't try to teach them to swim*
 - When your child is in crisis, keep them safe, **ACT is for when they are calm and rational**

For more information about CPRT or Garry Landreth, go to: <http://cpt.unt.edu/>
For additional questions about ACT, please contact your child's social worker.

Let's give it a try 😊

Situation:

A:

C:

T:

Situation:

A:

C:

T:

Situation:

A:

C:

T:
