

## The Active Child – Testing Boundaries

Active children can be a handful! It's important to remember that a high energy level can be a part of normal development.

Remember children are learning to be their own person. This means they:

- 1) Need positive **attention**
- 2) Will **test their boundaries**
  - Children continually test boundaries to know they are safe and secure with you as their guide.
  - They need boundaries to continue to be curious and explore the world.
- 3) Are **learning to understand connections** with others
  - Child and adults can have different thoughts/ideas/plans about the same thing.

### Here are some things parents can do for an active child:

#### Avoid Negative Attention:

- Keep calm and neutral when redirecting to a different activity. Think about what your face and voice are saying.
- Tell your child what is okay "Tables are for food, not for climbing. We can climb the couch."

#### Praise Good Behavior:

- When you're having fun with your child and they are listening, tell them how you feel! "I love when we laugh together. It makes me so happy".
- Actions often speak louder than words. Use a hug, kiss, back rub, smile, or applaud.

#### Routines:

- Having a general order that things in the day happen will help your child predict what is coming next, become more independent, and stay calmer. Most adults are calmer when they know what is coming and what is expected of them.
- Use "First \_\_, Then \_\_" Language to help your child understand what is coming. For example, "First we get our shoes on, then we go outside".

#### Build Relationship:

- Tickle games, rhyme songs (row row row your boat etc.), chase games ("I'm going to get you..."), and rough and tumble play are great ways to:
  - Build relationship
  - Match energy levels
  - Develop attention
- Be curious together! Talk about what you see.
  - "I wonder why...(there's a bug on the window; Billy is laughing)..."
  - "I'm noticing...(it's breezy; people are talking really loud)..."
  - "I'm thinking about...(the time I stepped in a puddle and got wet socks; lunch time)..."