



# Learning & Growing Together

An online newsletter for parents!

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## Setting Limits with Children

*A child's social and emotional development is critical to her success in school. One factor in fostering this development is in setting limits with children. It is imperative that we teach children effective methods for problem-solving that will benefit their social and emotional development.*

Eleanor Reynolds, the editor of *The Best Problem-Solver: Articles for Parents and Teachers* and the author of *Guiding Young Children: A Problem-Solving Approach*, offers the following advice for teachers and parents in setting limits the problem-solving way:

What is the problem-solving approach? It is a way to approach a child's inappropriate or undesirable behavior as a problem to be solved. It helps children solve conflict through negotiation, uses active listening to help children express their feelings, and

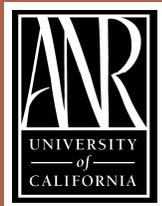
when a child's behavior is unsafe, destructive, irresponsible, or disrespectful, the problem-solving approach provides strategies for setting limits. Setting limits this way considers the need behind the behavior and helps the child fill that need responsibly.

### Benefits of the Problem-Solving Approach

Teaching through problem solving instead of by punishing enhances and enriches the adult-child relationship. The problem-solving approach does not use "discipline," because that term represents rules and punishment. The goal of problem-solving is to **teach**. By teaching a child the appropriate and responsible way to behave, you give a child the gift of a lifetime, not punishment for the moment.

### How & When Do You Set Limits

First ask yourself, "Is a limit really needed or is there a satisfactory



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## Fall Into a Good Book!

*Here are some wonderful books about fall harvest to help you make the most of your read aloud experiences with your child. Read, read, read; you're building a strong foundation for your child's later reading abilities!*

*Possum's Harvest Moon*  
by Anne Hunter

*Harvest*  
DK Publishing

*Tops and Bottoms*  
Janet Stevens

*Harvest Time*  
Mercer Mayer

*Autumn*  
Nicola Baxter

*Autumn Leaves*  
Ken Robbins

*Fall Harvest*  
Gail Saunders Smith

*Autumn Story*  
Jill Barklem

*When Autumn Comes*  
Robert Maass

*Clifford's First Autumn*  
Norman Bridwell

*Picking Apples and Pumpkins*  
Amy and Richard Hutchings

*A Harvest of Color*  
Melanie Eclare

*Harvest Time*  
Michael Scott

*Tucker's Apple Dandy Day*  
Susan Winget

*Apples, Apples!*  
Salina Yoon

## Songs to Learn Together

*Singing songs with children is also a way to promote healthy brain development. Singing, listening to music, and doing rhythmic activities all help in making connections in the part of the brain that will later be used for math and science.*

### HAVE YOU SEEN?

Sung to: *The Muffin Man*

By: unknown

Have you seen the pumpkin man, the pumpkin man, the

pumpkin man?  
Have you seen the pumpkin man, who lives in the pumpkin patch?

Have you seen the old black witch, the old, old witch, the old, old witch?  
Have you seen the old, old witch, who lives in the haunted house?

Have you seen the scary ghost, the scary ghost, the scary ghost?  
Have you seen the scary ghost,

who lives in the old ghost town?

Have you seen the big black bat, the big black bat, the big black?  
Have you seen the big black bat, who lives in the cold dark cave?

Yes, we have. We've seen these things, seen these things, seen these things.  
Yes we have, we've seen these things, we saw them on Halloween!



## Pumpkin Patch Muffins

These moist, wholesome, and yummy pumpkin muffins will help keep you moving all day long!

Have your child help with measuring the ingredients, stirring the mixtures, and spooning the batter.

### WHAT YOU NEED:

- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup applesauce
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 cup low fat milk
- 2 cups all purpose flour

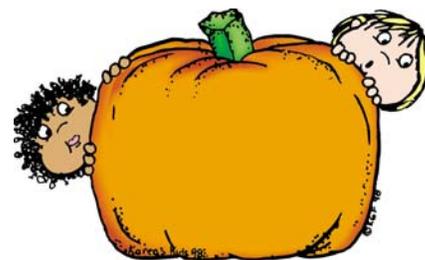
- 1 cup wheat flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt (optional)
- mixing bowls
- spoons
- muffin tin
- paper muffin tin liners

5. Add the dry ingredients to the pumpkin mixture and stir until just combined.
6. Spoon the batter into the muffin tin.
7. Bake for 20 minutes.
8. Enjoy warm with a glass of low fat milk or 100% fruit juice.

### WHAT YOU DO:

1. Preheat the oven to 375°.
2. In a large mixing bowl, mix the pumpkin, brown sugar, applesauce, eggs.
3. Add the milk to the mixture.
4. In a separate bowl, sift the flour with the baking powder and salt.

Yield: 10-12 muffins



## Setting Limits with Children *continued*

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alternative?" "Could the child learn something positive by continuing their behavior?" "Is there a better way to help the child fill his needs?" If you decide a limit is needed, here are the problem-solving ways to set limits:

◆ **The I-Message** (a three-part statement). State your feelings, what is happening, and why you are concerned. I-Messages teach a child how to respond to your concerns. When using an I



- Message, bend down to the child's level and make eye contact. Keep your voice and facial expression pleasant, with a sense of expectation. Show that you trust and expect the child to respond responsibly. If safety is

involved, remove the child from danger as you speak. *Examples: When I see you running indoors, I get scared because you could slip and hit your head. It upsets me when you leave the books on the*

*floor because they can get stepped on and torn.*

◆ **Giving Information.** Ask yourself, "What does the child need to know about this problem?" Give information in a conversational, nonconfrontive way and wait for the response. Add information as needed; children seldom react instantly to any request. *Examples: Time to put away the toys (wait)...The toys get put away now (wait)...I'll wait with you while you put them away (stay until they are*

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## Setting Limits with Children *continued*

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*put away. With toddlers, offer a little help).*

### ◆ Natural or Logical

**Consequences.** Consequences are the results of the child's behavior. A natural consequence happens without your help, such as the pain when a child runs and trips. A logical consequence is one you arrange to fit the behavior, but it should not be used as a punishment. Ask yourself, "What would be a logical result of this behavior?" *Examples: You didn't clean up the toys during clean up time, so you'll*

*have less outdoor play time. Your juice spilled on the floor. Here's a paper towel to wipe it up.*

◆ **Contingencies.** A child must complete one action before she can perform a second action. Ask yourself, "What should she finish before she can start something else?" Your presence may be required to assure that she finishes the first task. *Examples: When the toys are put away we can go to the playground. When your pajamas are on we can read a book.*



◆ **Choices.** These should always be real choices between two fairly equal options, not between something desirable and punishment. Present a choice in a neutral way, not favoring either. Make sure that the choice is favorable to you. Ask yourself, "How can I avoid a power struggle over this?" Always provide the child and yourself a way out. This works well with strong-willed, confrontational children. *Examples: Here are two outfits: you pick which one to wear. Would you rather have peas or corn with dinner?*