

A-C-T Limit Setting

Acknowledge the feelings, wants, wishes (*empathically*)

Communicate the limit (*factually*).

Target acceptable alternatives.

Example - Protecting the room:

A - You want to draw on the wall,

C - the wall is not for drawing on.

T - You can draw on this piece of paper.

Example - Transition Time:

A - You want to keep playing. You're having so much fun that you don't want to stop.

C - It's time to come to the table for the lesson.

T - You can choose a fun way to walk to the table. You can walk like a penguin or hop like a bunny!

Example - Teaching Time:

A - You want to talk and play, and it's hard to sit still.

C - It's time to sit still and listen to the lesson.

T - You can talk and play in 15 minutes after we finish the lesson.

Helpful Hints:

You can demonstrate acceptance of the feeling even when the behavior is unacceptable.

Use the child's name to capture their attention.

This tool requires empathy in your tone and patience in your practice. You may need to repeat the A-C-T multiple times in order for the child to bring themselves under control.

When a situation is urgent and/or dangerous, begin with C.

Example: Joey is aggressing Suzie (hitting and slapping).

C - Joey, Suzie is not for hitting. (You may need to step in between the children).

A - Something happened here that upset you.

T - You can tell Suzie how frustrated you are or draw a picture to show her how frustrated you are.