



## **Boundary Setting from a Neurobiological Perspective**

When setting boundaries, it is important to acknowledge before redirecting. Acknowledging before redirecting supports shifting the expression of the urges and behaviors while reducing the likelihood of internalizing shame. These approaches to boundary setting come second to safety.

### **Setting the Boundary:**

As boundaries are set, the following are important:

1. Ground yourself so you have something stable to offer.
2. Use a non-threatening, yet serious voice.
3. Acknowledge before redirecting.

### **Redirect with Action:**

- Grounding the energy by physically modeling bringing it down.  
Example: There is a lot of high energy in the group including movement and words. Stand up and move your energy down by rubbing down on your thighs and pushing your legs to the ground while taking deep breaths with or without words.
- Gesture where you want the energy to go.  
Example: Noah is throwing toys. “Noah, throw them this way.” (gesture the direction)
- Bring in containment to keep it moving.  
Example: Emma is dumping sand onto the floor. “Emma, this feels important for you to do. Let’s do it into this box.”
- Pretend  
Example: Hudson really wants to dump water onto your head. “Hudson, pretend to dump it on me.” Once he does, respond as if it were just dumped on you.

### **Redirect with Words:**

- “Show me or find another way”  
Example: Olivia is trying to hit you. “Olivia, I get it this feels really big, show me another way.” Or, “I get it, there’s a lot of energy in your hands, let’s find another way to move it.”
- “I don’t need to hurt/my body doesn’t need to hurt to understand.”  
Example: Mason is throwing marbles at you, and you’ve attempted twice to acknowledge and redirect. “Mason, I don’t have to hurt to understand how big this feels. Show me another way.”