

# What's Next?

## MAIN IDEA

- Children NEED PREDICTABILITY AND STRUCTURE in their lives in order to feel safe
- This sense of SAFETY IS REQUIRED FOR CHILDREN TO LEARN and to be able to REGULATE THEIR EMOTIONS
- There are so many things that are new to children, that having a basic sense of safety provides them with the FOUNDATION REQUIRED TO ALLOW THEM TO LEARN to explore their environment and begin to be able to problem solve and be curious about new things

## RECIPE FOR CREATING BOUNDARIES

1. 2 cups **CLARITY**
  - In order to be able to have a clear conversation about boundaries, we first have to be clear in our heads about what is and is not acceptable behavior to us
  - This is **especially important to discuss between adults, because different families have different boundaries**
  - I.e. some families allow kids to talk back, or swear, or watch hours of TV, allow them to make their own bedtime etc,
  - These behaviors may be acceptable to some people and not to others and depends in large part on how we were raised
  - Often parents come from families with different boundaries, so having a clear idea of what you, as parents or as an institution, are willing to tolerate or not, is the first step in creating clear boundaries
2. 1 cup **EXPLICIT CONVERSATION**
  - Children, especially at younger ages, need help with deductive reasoning (the ability to draw appropriate conclusions from events)
  - Being EXPLICIT (talking about it directly) helps keep boundaries clear AND REPETITION when things are calm as well as when things are escalating (in crisis) is important for them to make that connection stronger
3. 3 cups **CONSISTENCY**
  - People **LEARN QUICKEST WHEN THEY GET THE SAME MESSAGE EVERY TIME, FROM EVERYONE WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CARE**
  - They also learn best when it is done in a **matter of fact way**
  - When parents or caregivers become reactive and angry in response to something the child has done, this increases their anxiety and distress because how can they calm down if their role model is upset- there must be something really wrong then and it makes them more fearful of the situation, or of being rejected by their caregiver
  - When people are get very emotionally dys-regulated, the part of the brain that can process new learning gets shut off in favor for the automatic fight or run response we get when threatened.

## WHOSE APPROVAL ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

- It is very common to fall in the trap of **LOOKING TO OUR KIDS FOR APPROVAL or VALIDATION**
- Then their behavior, whether or good or bad, becomes a reflection of us, and **IT BECOMES PERSONAL**
- When things are personal, we are much more likely to be **REACTIVE**
- As opposed to **CHOOSING OUR ACTIONS AND REACTIONS ACCORDING TO OUR VALUES AS A PARENT and what we want to TEACH them**
- When we look to ourselves, and other adults, or partners for support and validation that our choices as parents are correct, or to problem solve alternatives, we can **see actions as BEHAVIOR and focus on being their LIFE COACH**

## CLARIFY YOUR VALUES

- If you could choose 5 of the most important things you want to teach your child, what would they be?
- How can you teach them or foster these characteristics in them?
- How are you modeling this behavior right now?
- What can YOU do to start to model this value for your children?

