

Give Your Child a HUG: Ecoplay Limit Setting

Give your child a HUG! We all want to be heard and understood. Children are no different than adults in wanting to think that their feelings and thoughts are being respected. Research has shown that children are more willing to comply with the rules if they feel their parents and caregivers have understood how they feel about the situation. The most effective way to let your child know what the rules are is to give your child a HUG. The HUG method of limit setting is:

H

HEAR what your child is saying. Listen to the feelings your child is expressing, and communicate to your child that you have heard those feelings. Note that you do not have to agree with the way your child feels in order to respect your child's feelings. There is no such thing as a "wrong" feeling. What may cause problems is the way your child chooses to respond to the feeling. The feeling itself is not the problem.

U

UNDERSTAND barriers to compliance. Why is your child resisting the rule or the limit? What is the message your child's behavior is sending? What is a possible solution that would help your child to comply with the rule? For example, if your child wants to play with paints on the floor instead of in a tray on the kitchen table, try to understand why, then give them a reason why following the rule would be more acceptable.

G

GIVE your child an alternative choice that is acceptable to both of you. For example, if your child wants to play with the paints on the floor, give him/her the alternative of playing with the paints in a tray on the kitchen table. Once you've given the alternative and made sure they understand it, if they refuse the alternative you've given then they've chosen not to play with the paints.

NOTES TO REMEMBER: If your child is having difficulty responding to your **HUG**, look for reasons for non-compliance. Remember to **HALT** what you are doing and look for these factors: Is your child **H**ungry? Is your child **A**ngry? Is your child **L**onely? Is your child **T**ired? If your child is experiencing any of these difficulties, then he/she is in Emotional Mind, and will have difficulty in responding to limit-setting. Take care of the HALT issues before attempting further limit-setting.