

# THE BOUNDARY SCRIPTS PLAYBOOK

Real World Scripts that calm chaos, teach respect, and keep connection intact.

• FOR THE AUTHORITATIVE PARENT •

## PREDICTABLE STRUCTURE AND TRANSITIONS

*Make time, routine, and follow-through the authority, not your mood.*

Predictability quiets resistance. We ground mornings in clocks, not pleading (Morning Slow-Motion), end screens with one warning then action (Screen Cutoff), and hold firm boundaries in public without threat (Candy Grab). When time instead of tension sets the rule, power struggles dissolve and cooperation feels natural.

### The Candy Grab

You're at the store, and they've locked in on something you already said no to.

#### DO SAY:

"You really want that. I said no. If you keep walking with it, we will leave the store."

#### DON'T SAY:

"If you keep this up, no candy or dessert for a month."

### Morning Slow-Motion

It's time to leave, but they're still half-dressed, distracted, and moving at their own pace.

#### DO SAY:

"You can get dressed now, or brush your teeth first. At 7:40, it's time to go."

#### DON'T SAY:

"Please, please, we're going to be late, so you need to hurry up!"

### Screen-Time Cutoff

The show ends, but they don't. They test the boundary for one more minute/episode.

#### DO SAY:

"This episode ends in 5 minutes. I'll remind you once. Then we're going to color / play."

#### DON'T SAY:

"Okay, just five more minutes, but that's really it." (for the third time)

### Leaving a Playdate

It's time to go, but they refuse to transition: clinging, stalling, or running off.

#### DO SAY:

Ten-minute warning. When the timer beeps, shoes on and we'll race to the door!

#### DON'T SAY:

"Come on we have to go! I need to pick up your brother and make us all dinner."

### Screen-free Dinner

Dinner's ready, but they're refusing to pause or disengage.

#### DO SAY:

"Okay, wrap up in two minutes. If not, we'll rest the screens all day tomorrow, so stopping's easier next time."

#### DON'T SAY:

"I don't care what level you're on, it's time for dinner."

## DE-ESCALATION AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY

*Calm the body first so the mind can learn.*

When emotion floods, their capacity to reason fails. The parent's calm body must become the anchor that steadies their world. Step out of the audience (Public Meltdown) or validate fear before facts (Bedtime Anxiety). Ruptures are rehearsal for trust. Hold the limit and the bond ("I'm here but we still have rules"). Safety first; everything else follows.

### "I Hate You" Moment

Anger takes over, and harsh words are thrown your way.

#### DO SAY:

"That's a big feeling. Hate words hurt but I'm going to stay close while you cool off."

#### DON'T SAY:

"Don't talk to me like that. We don't 'hate' anything."

### Public Meltdown

Frustration spills over in public... voices get loud, people start watching.

#### DO SAY:

"I'm sorry you're upset, honey. Let's step away for a minute and breathe it through."

#### DON'T SAY:

"Stop it, you're embarrassing us. Just look around. See everyone is staring?"

### Bedtime Fear/Anxiety

Nighttime worries surface: fear of the dark, nightmares, or separation.

#### DO SAY:

"I know you feel nervous... Let's check your night-light and do slow breaths together."

#### DON'T SAY:

"There's really nothing to be scared of. If you just go to sleep you'll be fine."

### Homework Overwhelm Tears

They hit a wall of frustration engage in negative self-talk and shut down emotionally.

#### DO SAY:

"These ones are feeling tough, aren't they? Let's take a big breath, then try the first one together."

#### DON'T SAY:

"Stop crying, it's not that hard and you did it before. You have to get this to pass the test."

### Parent Loses Temper

You raised your voice or over-reacted (it happens), and now the atmosphere is tense.

#### DO SAY:

"I lost my temper. That wasn't okay and I'm sorry. Next time I'll take a breath first."

#### DON'T SAY:

"Well, maybe if you just start listening the first time, I would not have to yell!"

## RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY AND REPAIR

*Boundaries become lessons so that consequences restore, not punish.*

Once calm and structure are secure, limits can become moral teaching. We correct tone without shaming (Talking Back) and link truth to trust through repair, not punishment (Homework Lies). Real authority pairs firmness with dignity. From discipline that ends in reconnection, not resentment.

### Talking Back

You're at the store, and they've locked in on something you already said no to.

#### DO SAY:

"You can be upset about this, but not disrespectful. Try that again calmly, please."

#### DON'T SAY:

"Do not talk to me like that! I don't deserve your attitude. Change it now, or else!"

### Toy Snatching / Sibling Fight

Two kids want the same thing at the same time, and it's turning physical fast.

#### DO SAY:

"You both want it. So I'll hold the toy for now, until you're both calm, then we'll take turns."

#### DON'T SAY:

"Seriously? Can't you two just share for once? Not one more second - give it back!"

### Homework Lies or Small Fibs

You discover they weren't honest about what was done (or what wasn't).

#### DO SAY:

"Truth keeps and builds trust. Let's look at what happened, fix it, and start fresh again tomorrow."

#### DON'T SAY:

"You lied to me again. If you keep it up the consequences will be serious."

### Refusal to Apologize

They've hurt someone but aren't ready or willing to take responsibility.

#### DO SAY:

"We can wait til you're ready to make it right. I trust you to be in charge of showing you care."

#### DON'T SAY:

"Good kids are always willing to say they're sorry - so just say it, please."

### Teen Rule Violation

They've broken a boundary; curfew, phone use, or honesty, and you need to respond.

#### DO SAY:

"You missed curfew, so we'll pull it back thirty minutes next time. We'll rebuild it from there."

#### DON'T SAY:

"You broke curfew again, so forget going out for the rest of the month. Or I can take your phone away?"