

I have **THE RIGHT** to...

SAY NO

Express
HOW
I FEEL

NOT
KNOW
YET!

Make
my own
CHOICES

change
my mind

MAKE
mistakes


DISLIKE
something

be
Different
from others

BE
Imperfect

Ask
WHY or
WHY NOT

ASK
FOR HELP

Express

MY THOUGHTS
AND OPINIONS

Big Life Journal

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5

KEY STEPS FOR RAISING ASSERTIVE KIDS

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1 TALK ABOUT IT



Tell kids there are **3 basic styles** of communication. Each time we speak or interact with other people, we choose one of these methods: **passive**, **aggressive**, or **assertive**. For young kids, use animals to represent each style. Let kids brainstorm different creatures associated with the 3 types:



PASSIVE

a turtle in his shell or a mouse that runs and hides



AGGRESSIVE

a tiger who attacks or bear that roars



ASSERTIVE

a wise owl or calm family dog who barks at danger

2 DEFINE BOUNDARIES 3 TEACH "I" MESSAGES



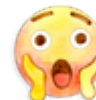
Discuss how there are boundaries in the world, or **lines that should not be crossed**.



One way to respect these boundaries is by discussing the **power of "NO."** Whether it's an unwanted hug from grandma or a bossy friend on the playground, kids need to hear that assertively saying "no" is not only — it's their right.

Here's the **simple formula**:

"I feel (insert feeling) when you (insert behavior). I would like you to (insert request)."



"I feel upset when you tell me I can't play. I would like you to let me join in."

Know that "I" messages work **because they are non-judgmental**. They neither blame nor criticize, and keep the listener from feeling attacked or defensive.

4 BUILD FRIENDSHIP SKILLS



- Assertiveness skills are not just necessary for dealing with the playground bully. It's often our **closest friendships** that require making our needs and feelings known.
- Start by talking with your child about the **qualities she wants in a friend**. What kinds of things make a good friend? How do friends act?

5 MODEL CONFIDENCE



If we hope to **raise confident kids**, it's crucial to communicate assertively in our own lives. You might start by:

- Speaking up** when you need to, and letting your child see you say (and stick to) "no"
- Discussing the times assertiveness is difficult for you, and **how you overcome it** by practicing
- Using a **calm, confident voice** when stating your views
- Praise (and even reward) yourself** when you do well