

Green Box ABA

Parent Newsletter



Parent Educational Workshops



In case you missed it, Green Box ABA is hosting special topics workshops for parents and you are invited.

The live workshops, where you can ask questions and interact with others, are exclusively for Green Box ABA families. Because we know that you are juggling many activities and might not be able to attend live, a recorded version is made available after each workshop.

You can find all of the recordings and related materials at our website. The recordings are publicly available, so you are welcome to share them with other families.

Here's what's coming up:

Let's Have Some Fun: Supporting Skills and Learning Through Play and Everyday Activities

Saturday, June 6, 9 – 11 am
Via Zoom

Drop-in and Share

A bi-weekly chance for families to meet, talk, and share.

Drop-in and Share is an unstructured opportunity to connect with other parents, ask questions, and share ideas. Join us!

June, 11 - 9 pm via Zoom
Topic: Warm weather activities

June 25, 7-9 pm via Zoom
Topic: Friends

Unpause Yourself: Moving Forward During COVID-19

Saturday, June 20, 9-11 am
Via Zoom

It's not too late for you to RSVP for the workshop on June 6. Contact Tamera at tmcrae@greenboxaba.com to RSVP and receive your zoom invite.

During this never-before-experienced health crisis you have been a parent, at-home teacher, sibling fight mediator, zoom expert, activities coordinator, and [fill in the blank].

You are awesome

Hang in there

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Why You Should Teach Your Child to Follow Rules



Kyle and his mom were on a walk. Kyle let go of his mom's hand and started running. When he got to the corner, he didn't stop and ran into the street. Fortunately, there were no cars passing through the intersection and he got to the other side unharmed. But his mom was very scared and upset.

Keep Your Rules....

Simple (part 1). Make sure that the rules are clear, specific, and worded as directly as possible. "Being kind" is a great rule, but what does that look like? And don't be clever or cute, which can be confusing! When a child is given an unclear rule, they challenge it so they can understand it. If a child is *trying* to comply but doesn't know how to do so, it causes frustration.

Simple (part 2). Too many rules can make things confusing and it's difficult to enforce all of them. Create fewer rules that you can enforce consistently, rather than many rules that are enforced inconsistently.

Consistent. Because rules help to establish expectations, if they are not consistently applied, then the expectations become as fuzzy as if the rule didn't exist. Will there sometimes be exceptions to a rule? In reality, yes, of course. But when that happens, the exception and why it is occurring should be made clear.

Positive. Frame rules in a "Do This" not a "Don't Do This" way.

Reasonable. Make sure that the rules take into account the child's age and functioning level.

Ultimately, learning that there are rules that need to be followed help to prepare children for life. Success in school, in the workplace, and in society requires that we follow appropriate rules. And, by taking away the uncertainty with some things, it actually allows for greater creativity and freedom in other areas—there is a reason why some geniuses wear the same thing all the time – it is because then they have more brain power left for the creative part!



Rules Help Keep Kids Safe!

Rules set expectations. Unfortunately, Kyle's mom hadn't established a "hold mom's hand" or "stop at the corner" rule. Kyle may still have broken away from mom, even with a rule in place, of course. But one of the main functions of a rule is to state expectations and let a child know how to behave. Rules tell your child what to do and what to avoid doing – they take away the "gray" areas. While every child is different, most kids, including those with ASD, find comfort in knowing boundaries. In fact, for kids with ASD, having a rule to follow can provide a needed "self-prompt" to get through a challenging situation.

Rules keep kids safe. Rules tell kids "don't run with scissors" and "stop at the corner." Safety rules mean our kids don't have to "learn the hard way."

Rules help bridge delays. When a child's behavior doesn't have an immediate positive effect, it's hard to understand why to keep doing it. Unless there is a rule in place. Flossing your teeth has a very small immediate effect; it's only in the future that the effects of flossing (or not flossing) are clear. In situations like this, it is the "rule" that keeps us flossing.

Why You Should Teach Your Child to Say “No”

Emmitt was on the playground with several classmates. The teachers were busy attending to other areas of the playground. “You should go push Emily off the swing, Emmitt,” said his classmate, Chase. Emmitt hesitated. “Yeah,” said Jose, “that would be funny.” “Do it. Do it. Do it,” chanted his classmates. Finally, Emmitt ran up behind Emily and pushed her. She fell off the swing, hard, and began crying. Emmitt stood next to her, a look of confusion and regret on his face.

To balance the skill of “rule-following,” we also need to teach that there are those times when it is okay to *not* follow the rules or to refuse to comply with an unsafe or inappropriate request from a peer or adult. Self-advocacy is the ability to identify a need and a solution, and then having the means to communicate that solution effectively. Our goal should never be to train up little compliance robots (this is true whether or not a child has ASD!). It is essential that children also learn self-advocacy skills and that there are times when it is okay to say “no.”

Here are some ways that you can help your child to begin developing self-advocacy skills:

They don’t always have to share. As adults, we understand the importance of sharing and compromise. But think about it. If a friend asked if they could use your cell phone to make a quick, but important phone call, you would probably “share.” But if they asked you to share your cell phone because they wanted “a turn” at playing games on it, well, that would be a different story. Adults don’t share, at least not in the way we expect our kids to share. So, should we expect our kids to share everything? Teach them that there are



times when it is okay to say “no” to a share *right* now. There are other solutions, such as timed turn-taking, that can teach a child that it is okay to say “no” to the sharing request.

Provide opportunities throughout the day to practice appropriate refusals. Offer items and activities that they can appropriately refuse and when they do so, immediately honor that. When possible, let your child make choices about how they spend their time, what they play with, what they will eat, and so forth.

Don’t phrase something as a yes-no question unless “no” really is an option. And when the answer is “no,” honor it. Too often, we “soften” instructions to our children by phrasing them as questions; such as “do you want to go to bed now?” when what you really mean is “it is time for bed.” When your child then responds, “no,” you are in a position of not honoring the “no.” Besides creating a possible power struggle, the *meaning* of “no” becomes muddled.

These tips are just a start. This is, of course, a complicated and nuanced skill. As your child grows, you can help them refine the situations in which they can, or *should*, say “no.” We are here to help provide strategies that can be worked on in and outside of therapy session, that are the right fit for your child’s current age and developmental level.



It’s a balance

Both rule-following and self-advocacy are important skills. Tipping the scale too far in one direction leaves your child without skills that are essential for their continued development.

Communication

To make sure that your needs and questions are addressed in an appropriate and timely manner, please use the following guide:

General questions about services:

Main Office: greenboxaba@gmail.com; 571-297-4308

Cancellations:

Contact your therapists and BCBA/BCaBA

Questions/issues related to copays/invoices:

Main Office: greenboxaba@gmail.com; 571-297-4308

Clinical Administration:

- Required testing
- School breaks/Saturday groups
- Schedule Coordination
- Service authorizations

Clinical Assistant: tmcrae@greenboxaba.com

Clinical and behavioral concerns:

Your BCBA/BCaBA

