

Supporting Staff in Establishing and Maintaining Professional Boundaries

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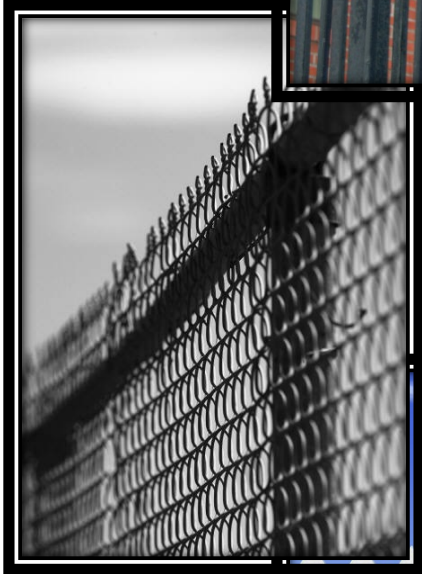
Objectives:

- Define and identify the importance of personal and professional boundaries
- Review the relevant Head Start Program Performance Standards
- Discuss the challenges of establishing and maintaining boundaries in relationship-based work
- Identify strategies for developing and supporting appropriate professional boundaries

A Boundary

- Marks the difference between your responsibility or role and someone else's responsibility or role
- Identifies the lines you should not cross with others
- Identifies the lines you will not allow others to cross in their interactions with you

Purpose of Boundaries



- Protection and personal security
- Create order
- Define oneself
- Clarify oneself in relation to others
- Protect others

Two Types of Boundaries

Personal



Photos courtesy EHS NRC

Professional



Personal Boundaries

Are physical, emotional, and mental limits that may be visible or invisible that define you as unique and separate from another

- ☐ Reflect your values and beliefs
- ☐ Expectations of how you expect others to act or speak in your presence
- ☐ Serve as filters for what's acceptable in your life
- ☐ Enable you to recognize and fulfill your emotional needs

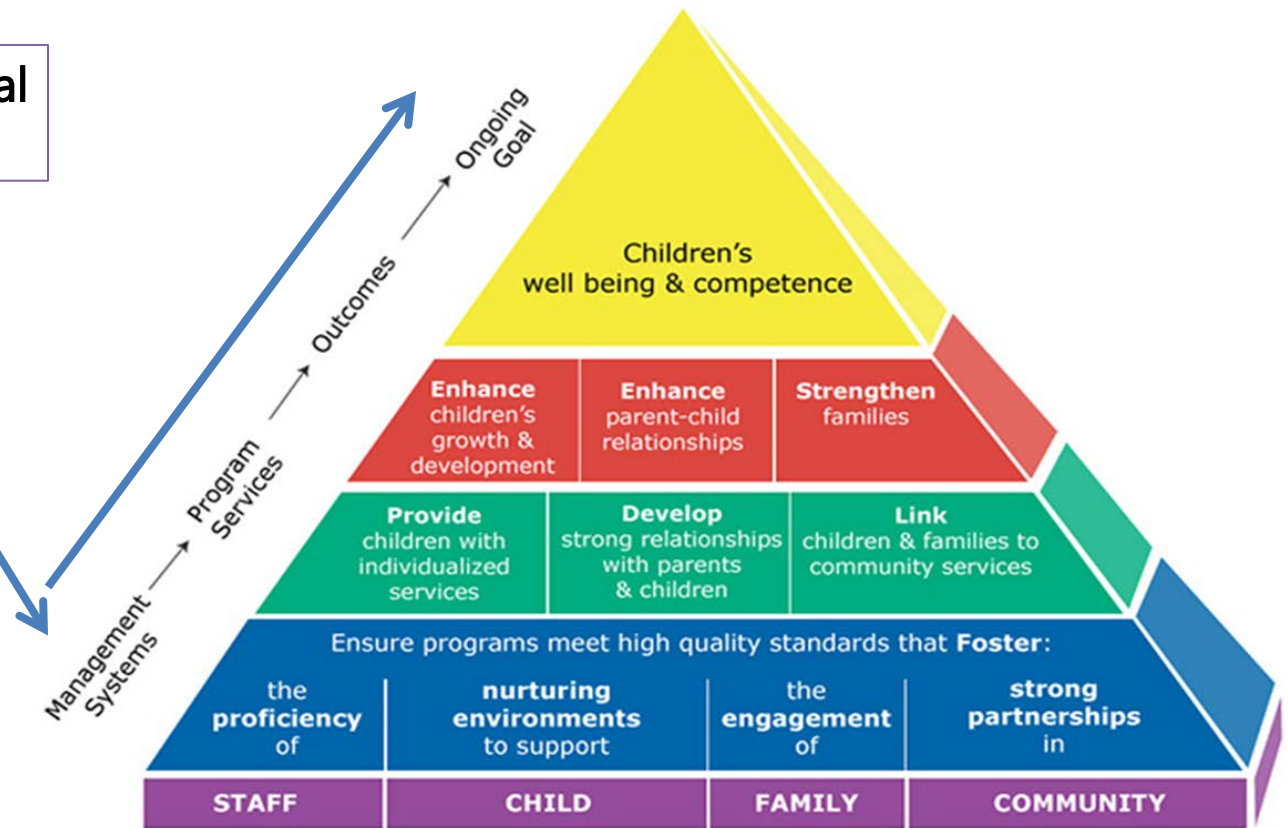
Professional Boundaries

"Professional boundaries are the limits that allow for safe connections between individuals."

South Dakota Chiropractic Professional Boundaries Training
http://www.dconline.cc/sdca_%20pb_training2.htm

Why do Professional Boundaries Matter in HS & EHS?

Maintaining Professional Boundaries



Program Performance Pyramid Model: A Comprehensive Birth to Five Approach

Personal and Professional Boundaries Self-Assessment



Photo courtesy EHS NRC

Complete the “Personal Boundary Assessment” in your packet.

SELF ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES			
Always	Frequently	Sometimes	SELF ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES
			1. I find it difficult to follow agency guidelines with families.
			2. I need clarification regarding my job description, policies, or guidelines.
			3. I determine or influence desired family priorities or outcomes.
			4. I work harder than families to meet desired outcomes.
			5. I find it difficult to engage families or "do it" for them.
			6. I have expectations beyond what the family identifies as the "Parent Partnership Agreement".
			7. I find it difficult to accomplish my objectives during home visits.
			8. I accept gifts from families.
			9. I attend personal functions when invited by families (i.e., weddings, birthday parties, etc.).
			10. I provide child care services for families.
			11. I provide transportation for families.
			12. I take families grocery shopping, or supply them with food or clothing.
			13. I give gifts to the children and/or families.
			14. I give my home phone number to families.
			15. I offer advice to families.
			16. I loan money or personal property to families.
			17. I eat the dinner or lunch when invited by families.
			18. I invite families to my personal functions outside of work (parties, shopping, coffee, etc.).
			19. I call families outside of my work hours.
			20. I struggle to find answers, solutions, or people to spend time with outside of work.

You will not be asked to share your information unless you so choose.

Factors That Influence Boundaries

- Values and Beliefs
- Culture
- Life experiences
- Relationships
- Temperament and personality

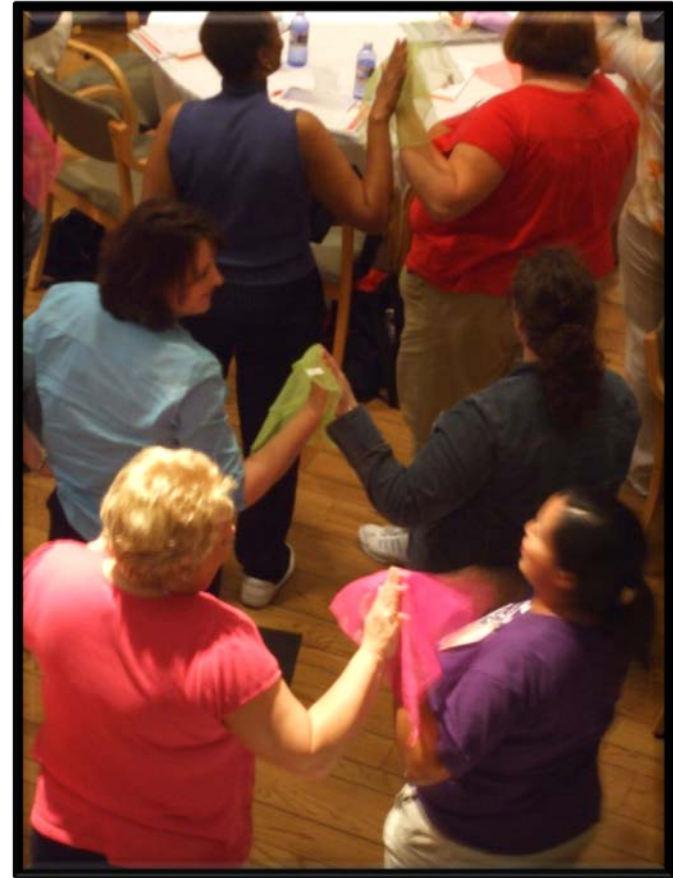


Photo courtesy EHS NRC

Healthy Boundaries



Photo courtesy EHS NRC

Healthy boundaries mean accepting that you, and those in your life, are unique, each with his or her own emotions, needs, attitudes, capabilities, responsibilities, and values.

Establishing Boundaries

Setting a Boundary **IS NOT**:

- ☐ Making a threat
- ☐ An attempt to control
- ☐ A sophisticated way of manipulation

Setting a Boundary **IS**:

- ☐ Being self-aware
- ☐ Defining yourselves and what is acceptable to you
- ☐ Clearly communicating consequences
- ☐ Letting go of the outcome

Vignettes



Photos courtesy EHS NRC



Your Reaction?

What policies are available in your program that guide staff in professional boundaries?



Photos courtesy EHS NRC

What personal issues might cause a staff member to disregard program policy?



Common Reasons

Fear of

- Rejection
- Hurting others' feelings
- Creating conflict
- Losing or damaging a relationship ("she won't like me")
- Feeling guilty
- Change
- The unfamiliar – (I don't know what will happen.)
- Complacency (It's OK. I would rather not cause problems.)
- Anxiety (I am afraid of what will happen and don't want to risk it.)
- Other?



Possible Warning Signs

In working with a particular child or family, do you find yourself

- Treating them differently?
- Thinking about them as friends?
- Keeping secrets about them?
- Telling them secrets or confidential information?
- Borrowing money from them or lending them money?
- Offering them gifts?
- Feeling that you alone have interest in that child and/or family?

The Absence of Boundaries

Human service workers experience “burn out” at a much higher rate than other professions.

Why?



Photo courtesy EHS NRC

Warning Signs of Job Burn Out

- Work no longer enjoyable
- Frustration with work affects family and friends
- Dread getting up and going to work
- Easily aggravated by co-workers, children, or families
- Not concerned about the quality of your work
- Feel exhausted and fatigued when doing your work



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Relevant Head Start Performance Standards:

1301.31 Personnel policies & 1304.52(h)

- Written policies must include – job descriptions, roles and responsibilities, Standards of conduct

1304.40 Family partnerships

- Family goal setting must include - collaborative partnership building with parents; mutual trust

1304.52 Human resources management

- Organizational structure must include – support for accomplishing program objectives; major functions and responsibilities for staff positions; adequate mechanisms for staff supervision and support
- Assure that staff has - knowledge, skills, and experience needed to perform assigned functions responsibly; follows program's standards of conduct on confidentiality policies

Policies

Required Policies

- Personnel policies
- Standards of Conduct
- Confidentiality
- Family Partnership Agreement



Photo courtesy of EHS NRC

World Café

1. Move together in your small groups to answer questions at each table
2. Take 5 minutes to complete the task described on index card
3. Move clockwise to next table when time is called
4. When you return to your original table, review everyone's contribution
5. Identify key ideas/thoughts to report out

World Café




Photo courtesy of EHS NRC



Developing Professional Boundaries

- Explicit (In writing)
- Mutual (Discussed and agreed upon)
- Demonstrates an effort toward fairness (Benefits everyone)



Professional Boundaries in Work with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families

Principles for Practice

Setting and Maintaining Boundaries with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families

1. **Start with the Standards.** The Head Start Program Performance Standards require programs to establish clear roles and responsibilities for staff and Standards of Conduct that include attention to confidentiality.
2. **Understand the value and importance of professional boundaries.** Professional boundaries in Early Head Start (EHS) and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs protect the well-being of children, families, and staff. They define the work that staff and families will do together, honor the differences in the roles they will play, and preserve the objectivity of staff.
3. **Acknowledge that boundaries can be fuzzy!** While professional boundaries are vital, they are not always clear – to children, families or staff. Staff have a responsibility to define them, and, in relationship-based work, it can be challenging to recognize and maintain them. Use the tips in this audioconference to support you and others on your staff.
4. **Start with the personal.** Many people have trouble setting boundaries, even at home! Consider how you define and maintain boundaries in your personal life.
5. **Celebrate your profession!** The staff in EHS and MSHS programs are knowledgeable, skilled professionals. By setting and maintaining boundaries, you honor your expertise and the value of your work.
6. **Define roles early and often.** Initially, families may not understand your program and the services you provide. Define your role with each family early in your relationship. As you get to know one another and work together, revisit those roles regularly.
7. **Consider the family's perspective.** Imagining how another person is feeling or thinking gives you an opportunity to think objectively about their behaviors and interactions with you.
8. **Support families in building/identifying informal support networks.** Sometimes, the families in EHS and MSHS programs are isolated from friends and family. By helping families identify and develop friendships and family relationships, you take a professional role in helping families find the support staff can't provide.
9. **Remember your goals!** Consider your goals in all of your work with families. One common goal is to help them build skills in problem-solving, negotiating resources, and developing a sense of themselves as capable. Be cautious of helping so much that you undermine that goal and others. In addition, be intentional. Consider why you are working with families in the way that you are. When you act with clear direction, it is easier to maintain boundaries.

Summary

Setting boundaries is not always easy – at home or at work.



Photo courtesy of EHS NRC

1. Become self-aware
2. Communicate boundaries
3. Reflect and repair

Resources

Harpo Productions. *Begin to Set Personal Boundaries*.

Accessed online Sept. 26, 2013 at

http://www.oprah.com/spirit/Begin-to-Set-Personal-Boundaries_1/1/

Office of Planning and Research Evaluation. *The Program Performance Measures for Head Start Programs Serving Infants and Toddlers: Research to Practice Brief*. 2001-

2003. Available at

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/prgm_perf_measure_4pg.pdf/

Professional Boundaries in Work with Expectant Families and Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families.

HHS/ACF/OHS/EHSNRC. 2012. English. Streaming Audio. 01:37:17.

Resources

Rock County's Early Intervention Program. *Self Assessment of Personal and Professional Boundaries*. Waisman Center: Madison, WI. (No Date). Available at <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/birthto3/WPDP/selfimprovementplan.pdf>

UCSF Human Resources. *Setting Healthy Workplace Boundaries*. n.d. Accessed online on Sept. 26, 2013 at <http://ucsfhr.ucsf.edu/index.pho/assist/article/setting-healthy-workplace-boundaries/>