

# Creating a Family Frame

How to Set the Boundaries  
Your Child Needs to Thrive

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# Your Child's Developmental Needs

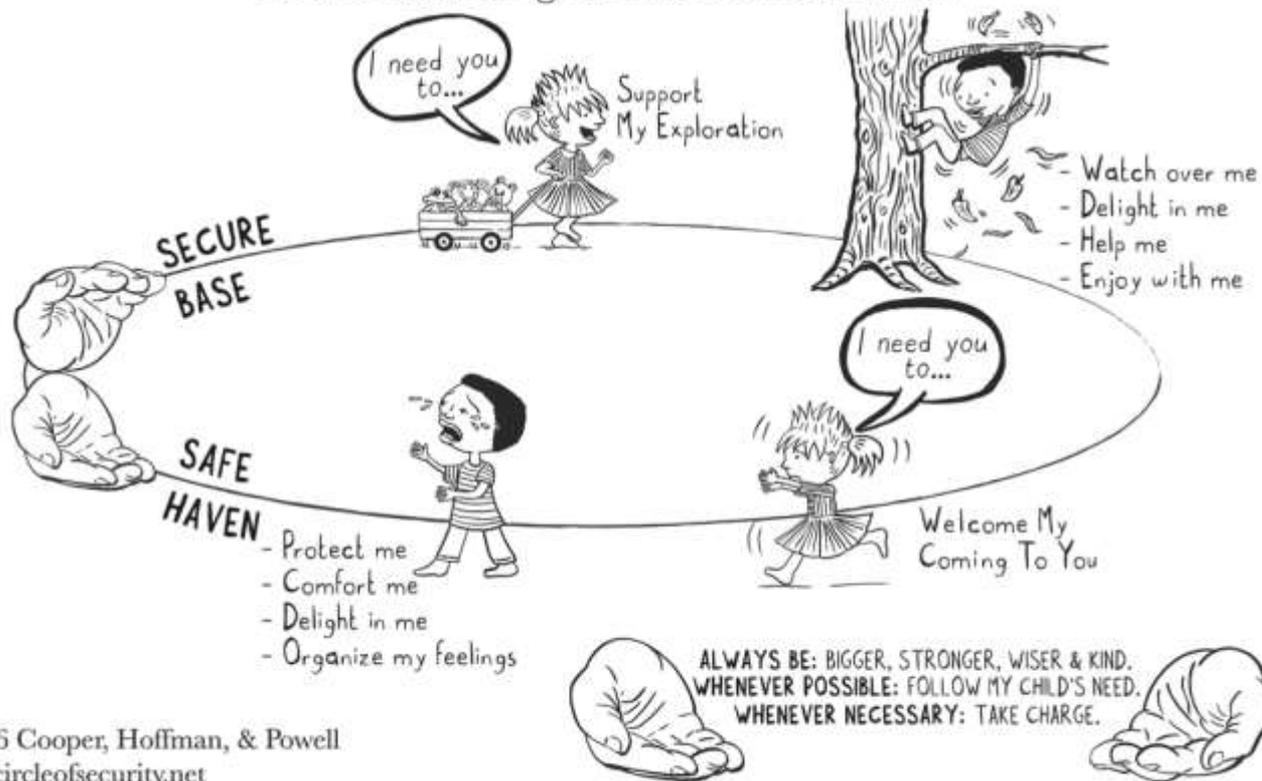
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- Need for Nurturing/Caretaking and Need for Exploration
- All other tasks are completed in the context of these developmental imperatives
- How these needs are expressed are different at each stage of development, but the needs are the same
- How you respond as a parent depends on what need your child is expressing, their developmental level, and your ultimate goal



# Circle of Security<sup>®</sup>

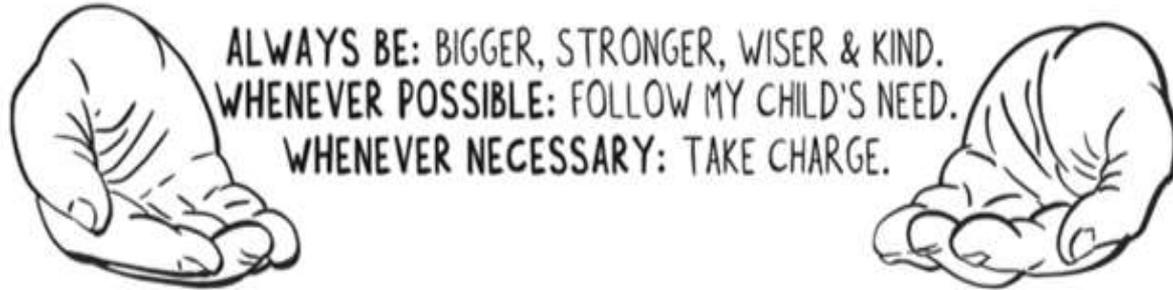
Parent Attending To The Child's Needs



# Purpose of Boundaries and Limits

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- Not meant to limit your child's exploration
- Meant to help a child explore safely
- Part of being bigger, stronger and wiser, is knowing when to take charge to keep your child safe



# What does this look like?

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- There's a division of responsibilities in every family
  - It is the child's job to explore and test the limits
  - It is the adult's job to establish the boundaries and limits, and enforce them when needed
- It is developmentally appropriate for a child to protest, cry, and negotiate the limits. This does not mean the boundary is inappropriate.
- It is also appropriate for parents to struggle when they see their child angry/sad/frustrated, but our own struggle should not inform the boundary

# Opportunities for Collaboration and Co-Regulation

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- “You really want to do X. I’m worried about Y and it’s my job to keep you safe. What solution can we come up with?”
- Our ultimate goal is co-regulation, including being a co-regulation partner when our child is angry with us because we cannot change a boundary
- Note on peaceful/gentle parenting

# What Does Co-Regulation Look Like?

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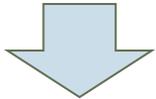
Emotional arousal



Request for validation



Environment responds with effective validation

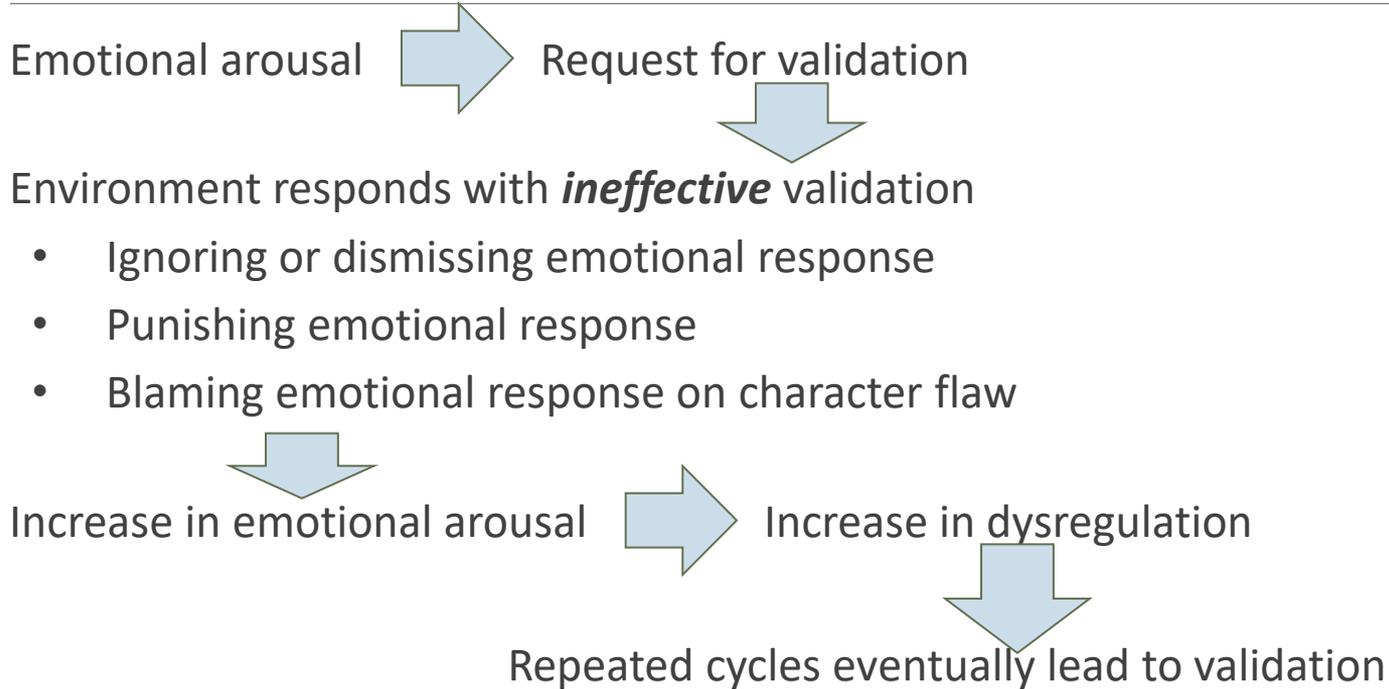


Decrease in emotional arousal



# When Co-Regulation Doesn't Happen

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# Rules versus Expectations

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**Rules** are based on safety and are non-negotiable

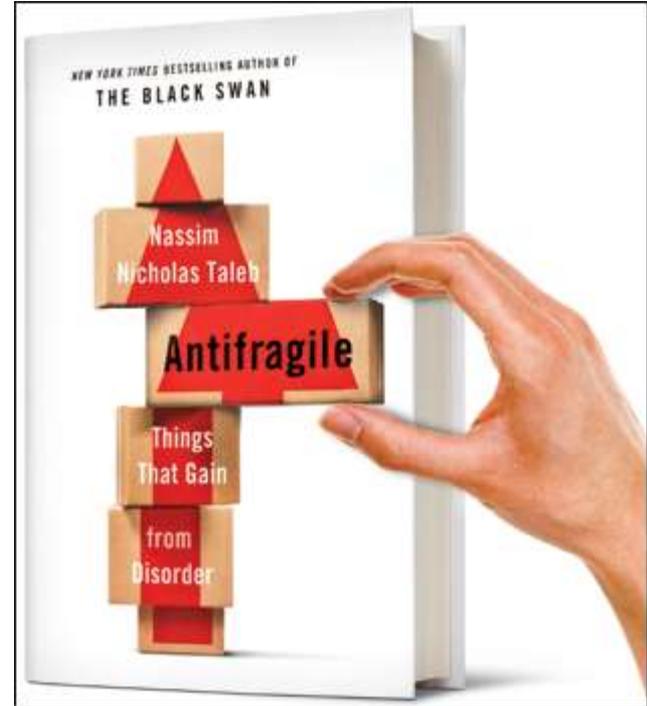
Breaking rules results in **consequences**

**Expectations** are things we want to see happen

Meeting expectations results in **rewards**

*Therefore, we should build up systems (and ourselves) to be “antifragile,” that is, to construct our lives and our societies in such a way as to benefit from major unanticipated events.*

*Nassim Taleb*



# Talking to Your Children about Your Family's Substance Use Frame



## Why You Should Talk With Your Child About Alcohol and Other Drugs

### Parents Have a Significant Influence in Their Children's Decisions to Experiment With Alcohol and Other Drugs

One of the most influential factors during a child's adolescence is maintaining a strong, open relationship with a parent.<sup>1</sup> When parents create supportive and nurturing environments, children make better decisions. Though it may not always seem like it, children really hear their parents' concerns, which is why it's important that parents discuss the risks of using alcohol and other drugs.

### It's Better to Talk Before Children Are Exposed to Alcohol and Other Drugs

If you talk to your kids directly and honestly, they are more likely to respect your rules and advice about alcohol and drug use. When parents talk with their children early and often about alcohol and other drugs, they can protect their children from many of the high-risk behaviors associated with using these drugs.



### Some Children May Try Alcohol or Other Drugs at a Very Young Age

It is never too early to talk to your children about alcohol and other drugs. Children as young as nine years old already start viewing alcohol in a more positive way, and approximately 3,300 kids as young as 12 try marijuana each day.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, about

# For Early Elementary-Aged Children

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- Not talking about it means their only sources of information are their friends and the internet
- 3,300 children under 12 try marijuana each day and 5 in 10 children under 12 obtain prescription medication for non-medical purposes (SAMHSA)
- Find natural opportunities to discuss substance use as opposed to having “the family meeting” (e.g., substance use portrayal in movies, child questions about medications or alcohol)
- Ask them what they’ve seen or heard, and dispel any misconceptions
- Be explicit about the family norms
- Be aware of the messages you send

# For Pre-Teens

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- Continue to build on conversations based on social media or movie portrayals of substance use
- Talk about why some people start to use substances, the consequences and what they can do instead
  - Great way to assess your preteen's coping skills
- Come up with a plan for what to say when they're offered their first drink/vape
- Continue to ask what they're hearing from friends and reinforce the family norms

# For Teenagers

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- Set clear rules regarding substance use
- Establish reasonable consequences for breaking the rules
- Do not be surprised when your teen experiments with substances – this is typical and normative behavior for teens
- Ensure that your teen trusts that he/she can call you if he/she or a friend is in trouble due to substance use
- Model effective behavior around substance use
- Know where your teen is going when he/she goes out, and reiterate the family rules — as well as the law – regarding underage drinking/drug use
- If, despite rules and consequences, your teen's use is impacting his/her life negatively, seek help

# Resources

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- Thriving Youth Task Force's Substance Use Resources
  - <https://www.communityfunddarien.org/tytf-substance-use-resources.html>
- Silver Hill Hospital
  - [www.silverhillhospital.org](http://www.silverhillhospital.org)
- Child Guidance Center of Southern CT
  - [www.childguidancect.org](http://www.childguidancect.org)
- No Drama Discipline by Daniel Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson
- How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline
  - 1-800-662-HELP