



Be The Container

brooklyn
parent
therapy

DESTROY

Kids have a developmental need to try to “destroy” their adults, as well as the need to be unsuccessful at that. That’s how they learn about the limits of their power. It’s how they learn about the acceptability of their authentic selves. They need you to “survive” their bouts of destructive rage in an undefended way.



What Kids Need



A child who is expressing their frustration with hurtful actions and words is often communicating: “I don’t feel safe in this moment. I can only feel safe enough to move out of fight/flight when I can feel you’re strong enough, resilient enough, robust enough not to be afraid of me in my full presence.”

SURVIVE

CONTAINER:

*an object
used to
hold or
transport
something*





CONTAINER

OBJECT

HOLD

SOMETHING

RETALIATION

COLLAPSE

01

A container is neutral. Accepting. Doesn't retaliate.
Doesn't defend. Doesn't collapse. Doesn't
judge/evaluate. It'll hold a moldy tomato just like it'll
hold a fresh one. Same job either way.

Container





02

YOU are the object. You are flexible: you can follow your child's lead/need and you can take charge when it's necessary. You're empathetic, strong, kind, compassionate, nonjudgemental, resilient, confident, understanding, respectful, mindful, intentional, robust, self-compassionate. You are the adult.



Hold

03

Holding is tolerating the big feelings and the behaviors that can go along with them. Giving permission for those feelings/behaviors to exist, while limiting their ability to harm. Holding is using co-regulation: the calmer your nervous system can be, the calmer your child's nervous system can be.

04

Your child's strongly expressed disappointment, rage, despair, fear, frustration, etc. Their physically hurtful behaviors. Their emotionally hurtful words.

Something



Retaliation

05

Using guilt, dismissing, manipulating, coercion, punishment/"consequences", yelling, blaming, shaming, stonewalling, physical violence, etc. Any behavior that communicates: "You deserve to suffer for what you've done."





Collapse

06

Withdrawing/abandoning, shutting down, displaying helplessness or defeat. Giving in, submitting, shrinking, cowering. Any behavior that communicates: “I’ve lost the ability to function as a parent.”



CONTAINER

OBJECT

HOLD

SOMETHING

RETALIATION

COLLAPSE

REMINDER

Kids have a developmental need to try to "destroy" their adults, as well as the need to be unsuccessful at that. A child who is expressing their frustration is often communicating so many things. In these moments, a child needs a parent who is flexible and sturdy enough to contain their child's anger, limit the aggression, avoid retaliation, and never collapse.



Kids

Have developmental needs...

Was this helpful?
Let's talk.

Schedule Now



brooklyn
parent
therapy

(347) 618-8243

www.brooklynparenttherapy.com