

Effective Boundaries / Developing Identity  
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As any parent knows, there is no manual to help us raise our children. Parenting may be the most difficult, exasperating, exhilarating, and rewarding job we will ever have. Thanks to Dr. Stephen Treat, many GA parents and faculty now have a few more ideas in their parenting and teaching repertoires. The Middle School Commons was packed for Dr. Treat's program on establishing boundaries, building relationships, and helping children develop their identities. Topics covered included a discussion about parental self-concept, the difference between power and authority, and maintaining relationships with children through emotional, attitudinal, and structural boundaries.

One very powerful message imparted by Dr. Treat was that later in their lives most children will not remember *what* we told them, but they will undoubtedly remember the tone we set and *how* we communicated with them. With this in mind, it becomes vitally important for us to listen to ourselves, pay attention to how we really feel about our kids, and acknowledge what messages we are giving them. Do we judge them negatively? Do we listen? Do we convey our unconditional love? On the one hand, repeatedly pointing out a child's flaws may contribute to a self-fulfilling negative attribution. On the other hand, a non-intrusive posture, non-judgmental language, and calm tone of voice may help create a truly reciprocal relationship. The bottom line is that if you and your child have a relationship based upon respect and communication, then your child may listen and work with you. This type of relationship endures. Relationships built upon authority have a much more tenuous foundation.