

## PreDefence

Self defense before SHTF

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# Self defense training for kids in 3 steps? – children and parenting 6

Categories : [Children](#), [Uncategorized](#)

Tagged as : [boundary](#), [children self defense](#), [kid's safety](#), [no means norespect boundaries](#)



I have a daughter and I want her to be able to defend herself when she grows up. How do I do that? I know nobody's going to answer that for me, so I've decided to try figure it out for myself.

My starting premise has been this: Adults grow up to be easy targets, largely because they learned it as kids.

## A family friend is turning her son into easy prey

Sally (not her real name) is divorced, and her kid is a wimp. Unfortunate, but there it is. He won't compete against other kids (even girls), cries at the slightest thing, and basically runs to mommy at the drop of a hat. Mommy is a classic [devouring mother archetype](#) but wants her son to grow up and be "more of a man". She wants him to stand up for himself. The problem is, she cuts him down should he dare to stand up to **her**. And let's face it, standing up to your parents can be one of the scariest things you can do.

I want my kids to understand boundaries, and to grow up able to set and defend boundaries.

So here's the recipe I've come up with. There are 3 steps to follow, and there's a hidden, secret fourth step.

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Does it work? I have no idea. I'll only know when they're adults (son and daughter – I'm a dad so the son worries me less).

### Step 1:

Play fight with your kid(s). Tickle fight. Pillow fight. Foam sword fight. Whatever the 2 (or 3 or 4) of you enjoy doing together that involves some kind of "fighting". It's important that the parent and the kid have fun or else you're going to stop doing it pretty quickly.

And for the record, no, there's usually no direct "combat skills" developed by play fighting. (Mentality is a different matter entirely.)



### Step 2:

Stop the very moment they say "Stop" or "No". Tickle your kid long enough and they'll be gasping/screaming-with-laughter "Stop". Or something like that. Sometimes it's hard to tell exactly what they're trying to say through all the giggling. But whatever it is you need to be listening out for it, and respond quickly.

The point of this is to "brainwash" your kid into understanding that "No" really does mean "No".

The number of kids I see that have their "No" overridden by adults, all the freakin time! Kids never get to say "no" to their parents, and if they pluck up the courage to do so, then the parent usually ignores it anyway. Or the adult gets more big and scary until the kid complies.

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We tell women that “No” means “No”, and that if anyone doesn’t listen it’s time to defend yourself. But this is after they’ve spent their whole lives having their “No” ignored by people more dominant than themselves (i.e. adults). And then we self defense instructors bitch and moan that these adults have no sense of boundaries and self-worth?

Give kids a lifetime’s practice of immediately doing what an authority figure says because they’re afraid of that authority figure. Then when they’re adults all you need to do to control them is to be mean and scary and make them afraid. Then they’ll default to doing what you tell them to do.

“Get in the fucking car” said in a really harsh whisper while showing them a knife.

“Stop fighting me bitch or I’ll make this hurt!” and the victim doesn’t wiggle so much.

And let’s face it, to a kid any adult can be mean and scary looking. It’s just a function of size and competence.

(And for the record, teachers absolutely fall into this category. Even the “good” ones.)

So while you’re tickle fighting (or whatever), when your kid says to stop, you need to stop. No last tickle. Not one more swipe with the (foam) sword. Immediate compliance with your kid’s boundary.

Again, we want to train our kids to accept “normal” as everybody stops when they say “No.” That way, as an adult, if anybody [ignores their “No”](#) then they know something’s wrong. Instead of burying their heads in the sand and trying to ignore the warning signals they’re getting from their gut.

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## Step 3

Once in a while (and you have to be careful with this), when they say “No”, you don’t stop. But here’s the catch: You only stop when they **make** you stop.

Now my kids are still pretty young, so basically any kind of boundary will make me stop (sometimes “flying off” them for theatrics and to make it fun again). So if they try shove me away, or get a foot against me and push/kick, then I stop.

Step 2 is to condition them to accept (deep down in their bones **understand**) that normal is having your boundaries respected. Step 3 is to make them understand that nobody’s going to rush to their rescue. That **they** have to take action in order to fix the situation.

This is a twist on the (highly excellent) theme of letting your kid experience [natural consequences](#). Like when they’re playing and get stuck up a tree. Nobody’s necessarily around to help them, so kids quickly learn to be able to calm themselves down and analyse the situation to solve the problem. Kids are great at this if we just mostly [stay out their way](#).

The occasional (very occasional) not stopping let’s your kid experience not-normal. They get to have a “hey, what’s going on here moment” of conflict with a bigger and scarier than them adult, and they have to dig deep and “fight” this person until they stop. Because let’s face it, a home invader, a rapist, a murderer is going to seem like a big and scary person. Even if they’re physically small, an attacker will stack the deck in their favour until the odds are overwhelming. And that overwhelming is what your kid will experience when having to fight off a full sized adult.

## Ground rules

#1 – the play must be fun. Your kids should be nagging you constantly to come and play fight them. They need to love it.

#2 – You stop when they say so. You are bigger and stronger, so they are in control. You want them to be **unable** to conceive of a world where “No” doesn’t actually mean “No”. No getting a last tickle in. (And yes, I mess this up more often than I’d like.)

#3 – On the rare occasion, you don’t stop until they make you stop. Try keep it fun, but I think (i.e. I hope) that it’s ok for them to feel like something’s wrong. But the fun must be restored as quickly as possible after this.

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#4 – The smaller they are the less it takes to knock you on your arse or make you go flying away from them.

#5 – I have no idea when this should be started, but I am very certain that baby age is too small. I suppose if they can't nag you (and try drag you off) to go tickle fight, then they're probably too young still.

### Step 4 (The “secret” step)

By play fighting with your kid you've just spent a whole whack of good, quality, time with your child. There's very little in this world that's as good for a kid's [mental health](#) as spending a bunch of time having fun with mom and dad. This alone can help your kid grow up to be well adjusted and avoid the biggest self defense [pitfalls](#) and [traps](#).

### Parting thought

Kids tend to end up playing “rough” with other kids all the time, so I don't know that any of this is actually needed. If allowed to experience the world most kids will probably go through the 3 steps above many, many times.

You want your son to stand up for himself? Want your daughter to be able to set boundaries? Then you have to be OK with them standing up to **you**. You have to be OK with them setting boundaries **against** you.