

T.E.A.C.H. TIMES

Teaching and Education of Autistic Children Through
Collaboration and Harmony



Jersey City
Public Schools
Department of
Special Education

Cultivating Support for your Child's Challenging Behavior:

Spring 2016

Have you ever experienced this situation: Your child has a meltdown, resists participating in an activity with other children, or does something that is just unusual given the circumstances and you handle the situation in a way that makes sense to you? After witnessing or hearing about the situation, a family member or friend makes a comment such as...

"Why do you tolerate that behavior? She is just being a brat."

"He knows his is not supposed to behave that way. You are indulging him."

"Why don't you just let her do what she wants; she will calm down then."

"He needs firm discipline. You have to teach him that is wrong."

You might feel judged, offended, or unsupported, or perhaps you feel angry or embarrassed, thinking about ways to avoid the person or situation in the future. Later on after you and your child have had a chance to calm down, you may reflect on the events and consider what you could do in the future to make the situation better for your child. But how do you respond to the family member or friend?

First, it is important to consider the reasons people may make these comments (or just give you "the look") People are shaped by both their personal experiences with parenting and the training and education they receive. If they are raised in a permissive-or punitive-household, they may transmit those values to their parenting practices. If they are exposed to information on particular methods of discipline, they may embrace those ideas to the exclusion of others.

When determining how to respond it is important to consider why the person may be making the comment. The likelihood is that they either believe they have insight that would help you or are simply uninformed. Second, it is beneficial to determine whether a response is worth your time and effort. If the person making the comment is someone you rarely see, it is probably best to simply let it go, assuring yourself that you are doing the best you can and that their opinion is not important. If, however, the person is part of the fabric of your lives, education is critical. The following explanations (with you filling in the italicized blanks) may enlist support.

Why your child engages in the behavior:

"My child's disability makes it difficult for him to (understand and interpret social cues, know where his body is in space, communicate his needs, negotiate circumstances that involve...), he may (cry, run away, strike out).

When he does this, people often respond to him by (giving him what he wants or lots of attention, leaving places). That may solve the immediate problem, but does not teach him better ways to respond which ultimately perpetuates his behavior."

Why you respond in the way you do:

"I know that (specific circumstances, environmental arrangements, social interactions) can be confusing or difficult. To help her understand and behave better, try to head off problems by (explaining complicated situations or expectations, reorganizing surroundings, bringing along items or activities that are enjoyable). This can help your child to tolerate difficult situations. You can also remind your child of what they can say or do to let you know what they need; that way they can express their needs appropriately rather than using problem behavior. When your child handles situations well and/or tells you what they need nicely, try to respond quickly and provide positive feedback and rewards. Try not to give in to problem behavior even though it might be easier because you want them to learn to participate in all important daily activities and communicate effectively.



JUNE 18TH 2016, 1:00 PM



AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

New York City FC will host Autism Awareness Night at Yankee Stadium on Saturday, June 18th at 1:00PM for our match against Philadelphia Union.

Use promo code AUTISM16 when purchasing your tickets and a portion of each ticket will be donated to Autism Speaks.

During the match there will be a Quiet Zone available for fans who may need a break from all the action on the pitch.

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**We're on the Web:
www.jcboe.org**



**JERSEY CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Cultivating Support for your Child's Challenging Behavior: (CONTINUED)

What they can do to help in situations:

When you have to tell your child “no” and they behave inappropriately you can ask family members and friends to support you as you try to follow through with your plan. This might mean helping you remove your child and looking away from them until they are quiet. If you work together, they will quickly learn how to behave better.

Sometimes comments from family and friends can seem completely off-base, others from experienced parents or genuinely concerned individuals may offer keen insight and direction, especially since they may be seeing the situations and behavior from a more removed objective perspective. You might even solicit opinions when things are calm, asking questions such as “What are you seeing in this situation?” “What do you think may be contributing to this pattern?” It never hurts to listen, determining whether their ideas align with your values and the principles that guide your approach.

Openly discussing and possibly sharing written information about behavioral support with people in your life can have multiple benefits. It demonstrates respect and strengthens relationships. It provides an opportunity to brainstorm solutions to challenging situations and it cultivates the support needed to care for a child with special needs.

**PARENTING SPECIAL NEEDS
MAY/JUNE 2016**

Safety Teaching Stories



Scripted by Twigtale in Collaboration with Autism Speaks

Child safety is of the utmost concern to every parent. Specifically, parents of children on the spectrum face many daily safety challenges. Together, Twigtale and Autism Speaks have authored teaching stories to help keep your child safe! You provide the personal photos and details, we provide the scripted story. Just upload your photos, edit, and order!

**www.twigtale.com/
[autismspeaks](http://autismspeaks.com)**

