

Advice for Others

STAYING CENTERED – TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES

1. I feel like the top priority is to take care of primary caregiver themselves as regularly getting break and exercise, and emotional support from families or a professional therapist.
2. Be patient, open the bottle and let the stress go away
I do yoga or run and meditate
3. When I was actively parenting special needs children, we had wraparound care: social workers, therapist, sensitive primary care doctor, monthly support group, our own individually arranged respite care with friends in the same situation and continuing education events- and it took every bit of it!
4. When I get to that point of frustration, I take a step back to try to gather myself.
5. Noting what actions you usually exhibit when feelings/behaviors come out, so you can recognize them when they happen and think “oh what am I doing right now”, I might need to take a breather.

SUPPORTING OUR CHILDREN

1. I'm a therapist and a clinical social worker. I'm thinking about my child's needs and emotions. What's behind the presenting behaviour (versus just trying to fix the symptom) I'm coming from attachment theory and my relationship with my son (and entire family) always comes first
2. When my child has a melt down, sometimes we try to break him out of it by giving him an ice cube to hold.
3. Connect before correct. Provide space for a do-over, let's try again - or, ask child "what is a BETTER way you can handle this?"
4. 1, 2, 3 Magic has been helpful for me, “tagging out” with my husband and vice versa
5. Create an environment that is rich with choice - allow your child to collaborate with you in creating strategies for responding behaviors.

6. When my daughter is upset, we like to put on music my daughter enjoys or take her on a drive. These are both activities that she finds joy in and we like to wipe the slate clean and get her in a good mood again!
7. What I practice is to talk, and take quite time and write just words in a piece of papers of things that I have done and refresh myself or my child about why am i doing something or where am I trying to do or do. The Why is important for us at home. And we practice, now even more, being flexible with our paths and the possibility to take different ones to accomplish something.
8. Take a breath and remember that this is hard for them.
9. Validating that it's okay for kids to experience emotions, it's what they do with them and how they handle them that's the lesson. Also, recognizing that some kids (my 6 yr old son on occasion) get embarrassed when they're being disciplined and end up becoming defensive and resistant to communication. Giving them some space, even to hide under a blanket and "disappear" for a minute is very helpful in calming/resetting emotions.
10. If my daughter and I are both frustrated it means we both need a break. The best way I can get her to calm down is when I am calm myself. It's worked really well for everyone at home. Other go-to strategies used often are lots of hugs and giving her choices if she has hard time expressing herself with words.