

One-Page Summaries:

# Managing Emotions & Handling Tantrums

ADHD Parenting Summit 2024



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# Transform Yourself Into the Rock-Solid Support Your Brilliant Neurospicy Child Deserves to Have

Elaine Taylor-Klaus



*“Parenting with ADHD is a daily exercise in letting go of the expectations of what we thought parenting would look like, so we can embrace and accept what we’ve got now.”*

## Naughty or neurological?

The key is understanding that there's usually a good reason why they can't "just do it." It's not about them being naughty; it's often neurological. If we assume they're being careless, we might react in a way that doesn't help them learn to manage themselves. Instead, ask, *"Is this naughty or neurological?"*

If you see it as a neurological challenge, you can respond with compassion, recognising that ADHD often involves executive function delays. For example, a 15-year-old with ADHD might be more like 11 developmentally. By adjusting your expectations to match where they really are developmentally—not where you think they should be—you can approach situations with more patience.

## Diffusing defensiveness

For kids with ADHD, feeling defensive is common, especially when they struggle with tasks that seem simple to others. This defensiveness can make it hard for them to accept help or direction, which can strain their relationship with parents. That's why it's crucial to help them diffuse defensiveness gradually.

First, acknowledge their feelings—if they say, *"I can't do this,"* respond with, *"It feels like you really can't right now,"* instead of insisting they can. To build autonomy, focus on small wins. Recognise their successes, even if they're tiny. These little victories boost confidence and help rebuild fractured relationships.

So, with kids who have ADHD, it's really about saying, *"I believe in you. I know you can handle this, even if you don't see it right now."* It's okay if they don't believe it yet; we hold that belief for them until they're ready. That's what helps them keep going (especially when they feel like giving up).

# The Winning Psychology of Confident ADHD Parents & How to Become One Yourself

Dr. Robert Brooks



*"If you can't be kind to yourself, your anger will just spill over onto your child."*

## Common mistakes parents make

Well-meaning parents sometimes misunderstand how their ADHD kid thinks. A common mistake is believing the child could be more attentive or less impulsive if they tried harder, which isn't true—they might not have the skills at that moment.

Another mistake is assuming that if a child has a good day, they should be able to do it consistently, but ADHD can be unpredictable. Parents also sometimes blame themselves or their child for difficult days, thinking they're ineffective, which isn't helpful. It's important for parents to adopt a positive mindset, practice self-compassion, and focus on **building resilience in their child**.

Remember, if you're not kind to yourself, your anger and frustration will spill over onto your child. And your child will notice it. One 9-year-old with ADHD told me, *"My parents think they're doing well if I behave, but some days, I just can't."* So, cut yourself some slack! Your child isn't looking for perfection, just support.

## Charismatic adult

Every child needs a charismatic adult in their life. They need someone who really makes a difference in their life by being supportive and encouraging. For parents of kids with ADHD, this means believing your child is doing their best and focusing more on their strengths than just their struggles. Parents should identify, reinforce, and display their child's strengths so the kid lives it and experiences it.

Start by noticing what your child is good at—those "islands of competence." Talk to them about what they enjoy, and use that to create a positive vibe, which helps build resilience and strengthens your connection. This is how you can **help your child find confidence and purpose**. It's amazing what a difference that can make.

# You Only Get One Shot at Raising Emotionally Strong Kids—Here's How to Nail It

Leslie Josel



*"Not every emotion is an emergency—children need to get through uncomfortable emotions to build resiliency."*

## Tough feelings

The best thing you can do for your kid is to give them space. Think of the brain as two parts: the left side, which is logical and calm, and the right side, which is all about emotions. When emotions take over, the logical side shuts down completely. So, it's always **feelings over facts**—no exceptions.

When a kid is upset, trying to reason with them or cheer them up might actually make things worse. Instead, keep things neutral. Say things like, "I hear you," "I'm here for you," or "Is there anything you need from me right now?" These responses show support without trying to fix or downplay their feelings.

## The earphone and hoodie effect

Sometimes, as parents, it's our responsibility to step in, even if our kids might not want us to. In these moments, we have to prioritise their well-being and make sure they know we're there for them, no matter what. That's why it's a good idea to **keep it one-on-one** and avoid two parents talking to the kid at once.

Here's the thing: if one parent starts a conversation, and the other jumps in with corrections or different opinions, it turns into a back-and-forth that leaves the kid feeling overwhelmed. I call it the "earphone and hoodie syndrome"—the more you pile on, the more they just want to shut down and disappear. So, it's not about when to step in but how to prevent overwhelming them in the first place.

And overwhelm can look different for each child—sometimes it's explosive, other times quiet, or even sneaky like lying or procrastination. So, instead of saying things like "You need to" or "You should," try asking, "What do you think about this?" This approach sets boundaries without giving them an out. Focus on one step at a time rather than overwhelming them with the big picture.

# How Investing in Your Own Growth Can Do More for Your Child Than Attempting to Change Them

Debbie Reber



*"True acceptance of our kids isn't a destination; it's a daily action we choose, showing up for who they are every single day."*

## Co-regulation strategies

One of the most powerful tools we have is our ability to co-regulate with our kids. It's really hard not to escalate right along with them, but we know that a **dysregulated parent can't help a dysregulated child**. So, you want to create an action plan ahead of time for how you'll de-escalate things that tend to be hard.

To start off, sit down and make a list of the 10 scenarios that tend to be the most triggering for your child and that have the potential to go wrong. Your goal should be to get in front of those things with a strong plan—like what are you going to do if this happens—are you going to take 3 breaths, count to 10, put your hand on your kid's shoulder, or just step away for a moment to collect yourself?

## Inner work

Just like most parents, I, too, used to think that I could just be this kind of mom who could juggle everything effortlessly. But I quickly learned that my child was going to demand that I show up for them in ways I never expected. It wasn't just about doing things for them; it was about doing the deep inner work on myself to be the parent they truly needed.

When I get triggered, I want to control things. I want to make sure everything happens as planned. But now, I try to notice that and say, *'Oh, it's controlling Debbie again!'* Actually, **I can't control this at all!** The best thing I can do is to pause and ask myself what's really going on in my mind—what's making me anxious or frustrated—and then find a way to make peace with it.

The biggest struggle I hear from parents is the mismatch between what we expect and what's actually happening. We want to create a specific outcome, but reality doesn't always match up. I remind myself that my child is on their own journey, and while I can guide them, I can't mould them into something they're not.

# How Uncovering the Core of Your ADHD Kid's Problems Can Dramatically Improve Their Life

Laurie Dupar



*"The biggest challenge for most people with ADHD isn't the medication itself—it's simply remembering to take it."*

## Don't rush to diagnose

ADHD kids are often labelled as moody, anxious, or unmotivated, but sometimes there's more going on beneath the surface. Before jumping to a diagnosis, it's important to rule out other issues like **vitamin deficiencies** or **mental health conditions** that might be causing or contributing to the symptoms.

First, make sure your child is physically healthy—check their vision, hearing, and get some blood work done to rule out things like vitamin D deficiency, anaemia, or thyroid issues. These can all affect behaviour and energy levels. Consult a specialist to figure out if there's something else going on alongside ADHD.

If your current specialist isn't addressing these concerns, don't hesitate to seek someone who is more experienced with ADHD and coexisting conditions. Trust your instincts as a parent. It's important to find someone who understands all the factors involved, and many specialists gain this knowledge through personal experience.

## Encourage 'pull over' breaks

Kids with ADHD often aren't aware of how their behaviour impacts others, which can make them feel misunderstood or "broken." They might notice their classmates or siblings avoiding them, but without self-reflection, they don't understand why. This lack of awareness can lead to feelings of frustration and self-blame. It's crucial for parents to help their kids become more self-aware.

One way to do this is by encouraging them to 'pull over' when things get overwhelming. Just like adults need breaks, kids with ADHD need space to calm down and reflect. Parents can help by **being proactive—checking in with their kids regularly** and identifying situations that might overwhelm them.



# How Parents Can Accidentally Set Off Neurodivergent Kids & Easy Ways to Fix It



Dr. Michelle Mullaley

*“Keep yourself calm, and you’ll have a better chance of keeping your kids calm.”*

## Acknowledge, don’t dismiss

Prevention is key, though it’s not always possible. It’s important to **know your child’s triggers**—like getting overwhelmed at the end of the day, during homework, or when they’re expected to sit still for too long. By noticing these patterns, you can plan ahead, like bringing a colouring book to long dinners.

Do they often melt down at the end of the day? Struggle with homework because they can’t focus and hate sitting at the table? Have trouble sitting still for long periods? If they can’t handle an hour-long family dinner, try bringing a colouring book, letting them read after a bit, or allowing them to move around before coming back.

If a meltdown does happen, try to understand what your child’s behaviour is communicating. Instead of reacting, ask yourself what they’re trying to tell you. Maybe they’re having trouble sitting still or feeling overwhelmed. Acknowledge their feelings—say something like, *“I know it’s hard; let’s do this together”*.

## ADHD, anxiety and trauma

ADHD, anxiety and trauma can look similar. All three can cause focus problems. Think about how stress makes us forget things; it’s the same for kids. They also share sleep issues—trouble falling asleep, waking up a lot, or nightmares. Intrusive thoughts are common too, but they vary. ADHD might cause random thoughts, while anxiety or trauma brings worries or fears.

Restless behaviour, like fidgeting, might look like ADHD, but it could also be anxiety or trauma. ADHD usually shows more physical hyperactivity, while anxiety makes kids hyper-aware, craving predictability and avoiding new things. Pay attention to your **child’s behaviour and family history** of ADHD. If multiple issues are present, get a professional’s help to find the best support.



# Giftedness & ADHD Kids: What You Think You Know Is Probably Wrong



Dr. Matthew Zakreski

*"It's never you versus your kid; it's you and your kid versus the problem."*

## Don't doubt your influence

First, pick your battles. You can't fight every fight—it's exhausting. Focus on what truly matters based on your values. For example, if your kid wants pasta for breakfast, why fight it if it's not harmful? Save your energy for the things that align with your core values, like addressing rudeness if that's important in your family.

Second, don't think you need to be the final authority on everything. Instead, find ways to collaborate with your child. For example, when assigning chores, give them options and let them choose what they'd rather do. This approach isn't about winning or losing; it's about meeting both your needs and theirs.

Also, as a parent, remind your kids that when they're angry, they should put their phone on aeroplane mode. It's easy to say something in the heat of the moment, but a quick text or post can last forever. The internet never forgets, even when emotions fade. Encourage them to take a break and avoid turning frustration into regret.

## Mending relationships

The key is humility and authenticity. Neurodivergent kids crave realness, so don't be afraid to apologise when you mess up. It's not about giving up power; it's about building trust. Apologies should take ownership without blaming others, and they strengthen your relationship by showing your child you're human too.

Another tip is to engage with what your kids love, even if it's not your thing. Whether it's anime, video games, or dinosaurs, show interest in their world. This investment in their interests makes them more likely to connect with you on your terms later. Remember, the best parenting is ego-less—it's about your child, not you. So, embrace their interests as a way to build a stronger bond.

# The Raw Truth: How I Transformed From a Controlling Mom to a Confident Parent of a Child With ADHD



Penny Williams

*"Meltdowns are not a choice. There's nothing you can do at that moment to stop it; it's something that must be processed through."*

## Guide, don't control

When we feel we have control as parents, we feel safe. Our nervous system feels regulated. It's important to recognise this in ourselves because it affects how we respond to our children. We are not supposed to control and overprotect our children. That's not how children learn grit, resilience, or independence.

We can set boundaries and enforce them, but **our role should be more about guiding than commanding**. When we focus only on control, kids don't learn important skills, empathy, or feel understood. Instead, being a supportive guide helps them navigate their challenges while still maintaining discipline.

## Watch what you say

With kids who have ADHD and are always on the go, it can be overwhelming for us as parents who might not have that vibrant energy. So, we need to be mindful of what we say and do because it's easy to lose focus amid the chaos. It takes lots of practice and mindfulness to make this a normal reaction as a parent.

What we say to our kids becomes their inner voice as they grow. For children with ADHD or autism, who often face a lot of negative messaging, it's crucial to be mindful of our words. They already struggle to fit into a world that isn't designed for them, so we need to **counterbalance the negativity with positive reinforcement**.

So, instead of saying, *"Why can't you just try harder?"*, try asking, *"What's really going on here?"* It's about being intentional and understanding, especially when our kids' behaviour feels overwhelming. It takes practice to shift our responses, but it can make a huge difference in how they see themselves.

