

Collaborative & Proactive Solutions

Nurturing the More Positive Side of Human
Nature in Our Kids and Ourselves

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Important Questions

- Are the ways in which we're teaching, interacting with, and disciplining our kids fostering the skills on the more positive side of human nature?
- If not, what should we be doing instead?
- What are those skills?

The Most Crucial Skills

1. Empathy
2. Appreciating how one's behavior is affecting others
3. Resolving disagreements in ways that do not involve conflict
4. Taking Another's Perspective
5. Honesty

Important Questions

- Why do the problems that affect kids lives so often cause conflict between us and them?
- How should we be helping solve those problems?

Characteristics of Helpers

- Helpers help.
- Helpers have thick skin.

Important Questions

- Who are we talking about?

Two Questions to Answer

- **Why** are challenging kids challenging?
 - Because they're lacking the skills to not be challenging
- **When** are challenging kids challenging?
 - When demands and outstrip their skills

Two Questions Not to Answer

- What **behaviors** is the kid exhibiting when he's struggling?
- What **diagnostic categories** best summarize those behaviors?
- Paddle upstream!

Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS): Key Roles for Helpers

1. Figure out what skills a kid is lacking, and what expectations – known as unsolved problems – the kid is having difficulty meeting
2. Solve those problems collaboratively and proactively
 - Encourages an adult-child partnership
 - Engages the child in solving the problems that affect his/her life
 - Leads to more durable, realistic, mutually satisfactory solutions
 - Teaches important skills

Four Important Themes of the CPS Model

- Emphasis is on **problems** (and solving them) rather than on behaviors (and modifying them)...**upstream** (not downstream)
- Problem solving is **collaborative** rather than unilateral (something you're doing *with* the kid rather than *to* him)...you need inside information
- Problem solving is **proactive** rather than emergent
 - this is possible if we answer two questions: **why** and **when** is this kid challenging?
- Understanding comes before helping

Key Theme #5 (Really #1)

Kids do well if they can

If the kid could do well, he would do well.

Key Theme #6 (Really #2)

Doing well is preferable

**(we've been focused on motivation
when we should have been focused on
skills)**

Options for Handling Unsolved Problems

Plan A: solve the problem unilaterally

Plan B: solve the problem collaboratively

Plan C: set the problem aside for now

The Three Steps of Plan B

1. Empathy Step

(gather information so as to identify child's concerns)

2. Define Adult Concerns Step

(identify adult's concerns)

3. Invitation Step

(brainstorm and select solutions that are realistic and mutually satisfactory)

What's Going On in the Empathy Step?

For Kids:

- We're curious about and interested in your concerns
- Your concerns are valid and of equal legitimacy
- If you're having difficulty identifying your concerns, we'll help you
- If you're having difficulty communicating your concerns, we'll help you
- You're not in trouble
- We're not mad at you
- We're not telling you what to do
- We want to understand
- Honesty

What's Going On in the Empathy Step?

For Adults:

- Jaw-dropping moments
- The more you know, the more predictable the kid is
- Modeling empathy

What's Going On in the Define Adult Concerns Step?

For Kids:

- Hearing another's concerns
- Taking another's perspective
- Appreciating how one's behavior is affecting others

What's Going On in the Define Adult Concerns Step?

For Adults:

- My concerns will be heard and addressed
- I am not losing any authority
- I am having influence

What's Going On in the Invitation Step?

For Kids and Adults:

- My concerns will be addressed
- I am invested in making sure that yours are too
- We can resolve disagreements in ways that do not involve conflict
- We are partners, not enemies; we are teammates, not adversaries
- We can help each other

Important Questions (Redux)

- Are the ways in which we're teaching, interacting with, and disciplining our kids fostering the skills on the more positive side of human nature?
- If not, what should we be doing instead?
- What are those skills?

Important Questions (Redux)

- When should we begin teaching those skills?

Important Questions (Redux)

- Why do the problems that affect kids lives so often cause conflict between us and them?
- How should we be **helping** solve those problems?

Important Questions

- When should we begin solving problems collaboratively and proactively?

Additional Information/Resources

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