

JANUARY 15, 2019

10 Tips for Dealing with an Explosive Child



When faced with defiant or violent behavior, most parents try “Plan A,” where they impose their will on an oppositional child. The problem? Plan A doesn’t work. Parents who move to “Plan B” — a collaborative and proactive parenting style — have a much better chance of solving their children’s behavior problems.

Oppositional, noncompliant, and defiant behaviors magnify and outshine nearly all other challenges faced by kids with attention deficit disorder (ADHD or ADD). The arguments, backtalk, and (in some cases) physical aggression turn daily interactions into constant sources of frustration for both the kids themselves and their caregivers — and there is too much disparate advice available for caregivers to know the best way to respond.

The model I originated — now called Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS) — in my books *The Explosive Child* and *Lost at School*, is a straightforward (and effective) place for parents to start to understand and cope with these challenging behaviors. CPS is based on the premise that defiant behavior is simply a response to a child’s lack of skills — that is, when a child feels incapable of responding to a specific expectation, he’ll lash out, push back, or melt down. CPS focuses on the *skills* that a child is lacking, and the *expectations* that are frustrating him, rather than on the negative behaviors themselves.

Some of what you will read below may be contrary to the way you’ve always thought about parenting. But if you feel that raising your explosive child isn’t going well, the following 10 tips may be a life-changer.

1. Don’t worry too much about a diagnosis. Getting a diagnosis “certifies” that there’s something different about your child, but it doesn’t tell you about why your child is oppositional and explosive. [Click Here to Read More](#)

TAP INTO THE KNOWLEDGE OF 20+CHILD WELFARE & CHILD/ YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXPERTS

Gain powerful tools and helpful resources to support the children and youth in your care.

This event brings together foster care, parenting, and child development experts from the US and Canada. We know foster parents and caregivers want information and tools. However it is difficult to attend workshops or travel to conferences when taking care of kids! This event is entirely online. AND it is FREE (for a limited time).

FREE ONLINE EVENT | FEB 11 – 15, 2019.

[Click Here](#) to check out the website for more information on this event.

(This event has not been approved for credit)

Things People Never Told Me

When You Start Living on Your Own from Foster Care, There are Some Things in Life that People Seem to Forget to Tell You About

This compilation of suggestions about finances, health care, employment, and relationships from foster youth transitioning to adulthood is aimed at equipping other youth leaving foster care with the necessary tools to become independent and successful adults. This resource is a product of the Better Futures Project, Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures, Portland State University.

A MUST READ FOR ALL PARENTS!

www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/proj2-ThingsNoOneToldMe.pdf

SHARE WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

What Educators can do to help youth in foster care

Explore the Student's Academic History

- **Contact the student's former teacher and school to find out about academic status, strengths, challenges and history.** Help ensure that school records and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students enrolled in special education are updated with all relevant information and evaluated by the appropriate staff at your school in a timely fashion.
- **Be aware that each move a child makes can delay academic progress by months.** Understand that many children and youth in foster care have a harder time learning because of their experiences. They may have been in educational settings in which they were not well supported because they were viewed as transient students bound to be moved again.

In the Classroom

- **Be aware that children and youth in care generally tend to perform less well in school than their peers.** Thirty to forty percent of youth in foster care are also in special education, so your student may already have an IEP or may need one. Determine the student's academic, social and emotional level and then find ways to help him or her fit into the class by using accommodations and adaptations to support educational success. Connect the student to appropriate supports, such as tutoring and mentoring.
- **The student may have a learning disability due to poor maternal health during pregnancy or prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol.** The enormous emotional burdens of grief, loss and uncertainty about the future can also impair a child's ability to concentrate, learn and acquire new skills. You can support the student's development by insuring that routines are regular and that he or she has opportunities to practice needed skills and is alerted to any schedule changes.
- **Structure materials and tasks to help the student achieve success, even if academics are a problem.** Help offset the chaos in the student's life by providing structure and predictability in the classroom.

- **Respect the child's right to privacy.** Students and teachers who do not have responsibility for teaching the child do not need to know about his or her foster care status. Become knowledgeable about confidentiality and how to address confidential issues appropriately.
- **Keep in mind that a youth in foster care (or one who has been adopted) may not be able to complete certain assignments as easily as their peers.** For example, constructing a family tree or bringing in a baby picture may be difficult for a child who has been frequently and suddenly moved or has little contact with his or her birth family. Similarly, securing permission for a special activity such as a field trip can be problematic when the current caregivers do not have legal authority to give permission. It may take more lead-time than normal to get approval through the appropriate channels.

Your Relationship with the Child and Family

- **Like other students, a child or youth in foster care needs to be accommodated, but does not want to be treated differently.** Strive to ensure that the student does not feel exposed as a "special case" as he/she does in so many other settings. At the same time, be lenient when circumstances warrant it.
- **Remember that many children and youth in foster care find it difficult to trust adults, often for good reason.** Recognize you may have to work harder to achieve a trusting relationship over time. Behavior and attitudes intended to be caring can appear just the opposite when they have been experienced in a negative context in the past. Be patient and consistent.
- **Some teachers may feel challenged by highly involved resource parents who advocate very strongly for the student.** Remember that these children and youth need someone who is on their side, even if that person seems over-involved. Try to work with the energy the parents bring to their child's academic life.

Do one thing today that will make a difference in your whole day

Get some extra zzzs. "Science is showing that even an hour extra sleep can change your mood and your emotional stability during the day," notes Sophie Grégoire Trudeau, an ambassador of the WE Well-being initiative. A mental health advocate and former journalist, Grégoire Trudeau has shared the WE Day stage many times with her husband, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. One in five people lives with a mental health or addiction challenge. "Addictions are on the rise. Eating disorders are on the rise ... anxiety, depression," Grégoire Trudeau says. WE Well-being was created by experts, educators, youth and innovators to empower people to nurture their mental well-being and resiliency with a focus on prevention strategies, awareness and actions. Surprisingly, even small actions, like getting more sleep, can help both youth and adults nurture positive well-being. Find more simple tips by clicking [Learn more](#),