

Parent Child Journey

An Individualized Approach to Raising Your Challenging Child

by Dan Shapiro, MD

Third Mile: Engagement and Understanding

You have reasonable expectations. You assign reasonable tasks. But your child says, “No.” You should not lower your expectations. However, to get to the same goals, you will need to modify and customize your approach.

Possible breakdown points:

1. Ready
 - a. Engagement
 - b. Understanding
2. Willing
3. Able

In this session, we will cover *readiness*; specifically, how to insure *engagement* and *understanding*. Then, over Miles Four through Six, we will have three more sessions on *willingness*; that is, motivation strategies. After that, we’ll cover reactive sessions before turning back to *ability*—and disability—in the last, Tenth Mile, session.

How to ensure readiness: Engagement and understanding:

1. “Two-step it”/ Separate engagement from instruction
2. Stop one thing before starting another
3. Pick the right timing
4. Be empathic
5. Get close
6. Speak clearly and simply
7. Use all the senses
 - a. Visual
 - b. Touch and movement
 - c. Music
 - d. Time
8. Be specific. Break it down
9. Check understanding
10. Learning by doing
 - a. “Forward chaining”
 - b. “Backward chaining”
 - c. Least-to-most prompting
 - i. Verbal only
 - ii. Verbal plus visual
 - iii. Verbal, visual plus physical
 1. touch on the shoulder
 2. touch the elbow

3. guide from the lower arm
4. hand-on-hand help
- d. Most-to-least prompting:
 - i. Verbal, visual, and physical
 1. hand-on-hand help
 2. guide from the lower arm
 3. touch the elbow
 4. touch the shoulder
 - ii. Verbal and visual without physical
 - iii. Verbal without visual and physical
 - iv. Verbal only
- e. Repeat as needed and fade support gradually
11. Be creative. Make it fun
12. Establish specific rules, roles, and reasons
13. Give choices
14. Anticipate, plan and communicate in advance

Homework for the Third Mile

1. Continue to practice time-in.
2. Figure out the best way to communicate with your child.
3. Choose a simple command; such as, “time for dinner,” “cleanup time,” “pajamas on,” “brush teeth,” and so on. Practice individualized and effective strategies for engagement and understanding. Pay careful attention to technique:
 - a. Separate engagement from instruction
 - b. Stop one thing before starting another
 - c. Pick the right timing
 - d. Be empathic
 - e. Get close
 - f. Speak clearly and simply
 - g. Use all the senses
 - h. Be specific, break it down
 - i. Check understanding
 - j. Promote learning by doing
 - k. Be creative, make it fun
 - l. Establish specific rules, roles, and reasons
 - m. Give choices
 - n. Anticipate, plan, communicate in advance