

SNOOP

SUPPORTING THE NETWORK OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMMES
ISSUE 81 TERM 2 2014



OSCAR Network
Christchurch

THE POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY OF PLAY IS PRAISING A CHILD GOOD OR BAD FOR THEM? SELF-REGULATION - THE SECOND CORE STRENGTH DEFENCE OF BOREDOM RAISING DRIVEN IMMORAL KIDS? OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING 3 STEPS TO STAY CALM WHEN A CHILD ISN'T NOT AVAILABLE ON THE APP STORE



ENHANCING CHILDREN'S PLAY : WHAKAREWA / TE TAAKARO TAMARIKI





THE OSCAR NETWORK

WE ARE AN ORGANISATION DEDICATED TO PROVIDING INFORMATION TO O.S.C.A.R. (OUT OF SCHOOL CARE AND RECREATION) PROGRAMMES.

Our aim is to support, promote and network safe quality, accessible OSCAR services which are professional and centre around the needs of the child and their whanau.

The OSCAR Network provides information on training, development, mentoring, funding & finances, research, advocacy, management and staff support, resources and the general running of an Out of School programme. The OSCAR Network encourages OSCAR providers to operate quality services, however it is not a function of the OSCAR Network to accredit or assess OSCAR services.

The OSCAR Network has a well-earned reputation for working co-operatively alongside other groups and agencies. We work as a team in an environment based on mutual respect and trust. It is the combination of skills, ideas and energy, which achieves results from the consensus decision-making process. We enjoy our work by 'thinking differently'.

THANK YOU

The OSCAR Network could not operate without the generous support of the following funding agencies:

Ministry of Social Development; Christchurch City Council; Canterbury Community Trust; Lottery Grants Board; Community Organisation Grants Scheme; Southern Trust.

Sharon Williams
Liz Hawes
Pam Hughes
Helen Kidd
Amanda Murray

Office Hours

Monday to Friday: 9am-1pm

Network staff are available for appointments outside these hours

25 Disraeli Street
 Christchurch 8240

Phone: 03 3793915
 e-mail: admin@oscarnetwork.org.nz

www.oscarnetwork.org.nz

SHARE THIS WITH ALL THE SCHOOLS, PLEASE

After a recent parent teacher interview we sat for a few minutes and talked about teaching children and what a sacred trust and responsibility it is. We agreed that subjects like math and reading are the least important things that are learned in a classroom. We talked about shaping little hearts to become contributors to a larger community – and we discussed our mutual dream that those communities might be made up of individuals who are Kind and Brave above all.

And then she told me this.

Every Friday afternoon the teacher asks her children to take out a piece of paper and write down the names of four children with whom they'd like to sit the following week. The children know that these requests may or may not be honoured. She also asks the children to nominate one child whom they believe has been an exceptional classroom citizen that week. All ballots are privately submitted to her.

And every single Friday afternoon, after the children go home, The teacher takes out those slips of paper, places them in front of her and studies them. She looks for patterns.

- Who is not getting requested by anyone else?
- Who doesn't even know who to request?
- Who never gets noticed enough to be nominated?
- Who had a million friends last week and none this week?

She is not looking for a new seating chart or "exceptional citizens." The teacher is looking for lonely children. She's looking for children who are struggling to connect with other children. She's identifying the little ones who are falling through the cracks of the class's social life. She is

discovering whose gifts are going unnoticed by their peers. And she's pinning down-right away- who's being bullied and who is doing the bullying.

As a teacher, parent, and lover of all children – I think that this is the most brilliant Love Ninja strategy I have ever encountered. It's like taking an X-ray of a classroom to see beneath the surface of things and into the hearts of children. It is like mining for gold – the gold being those little ones who need a little help – who need adults to step in and TEACH them how to make friends, how to ask others to play, how to join a group, or how to share their gifts with others. And it's a bully deterrent because every teacher knows that bullying usually happens outside of her eyeshot – and that often kids being bullied are too intimidated to share. But as she said – the truth comes out on those safe, private, little sheets of paper.

The teacher has been using this every single Friday afternoon since Columbine. She watched Columbine knowing that ALL VIOLENCE BEGINS WITH DISCONNECTION. All outward violence begins as inner loneliness. She watched that tragedy KNOWING that children who aren't being noticed will eventually resort to being noticed by any means necessary.

And what this mathematician has learned while using this system is something she really already knew: that everything – even love, even belonging – has a pattern to it. And she finds those patterns through those lists – she breaks the codes of disconnection. And then she gets lonely kids the help they need. It's math to her. It's MATH.

All is love - even math.

Adapted from <http://momastery.com/blog/2014/01/30/share-schools/>

CONTENTS

4
THE POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY OF PLAY: HOW PLAY HELPS CHILDREN TO FLOURISH

6
IS PRAISING A CHILD GOOD OR BAD FOR THEM?

8
SELF-REGULATION THE SECOND CORE STRENGTH

10
DEFENCE OF BOREDOM

11
RAISING DRIVEN IMMORAL KIDS?

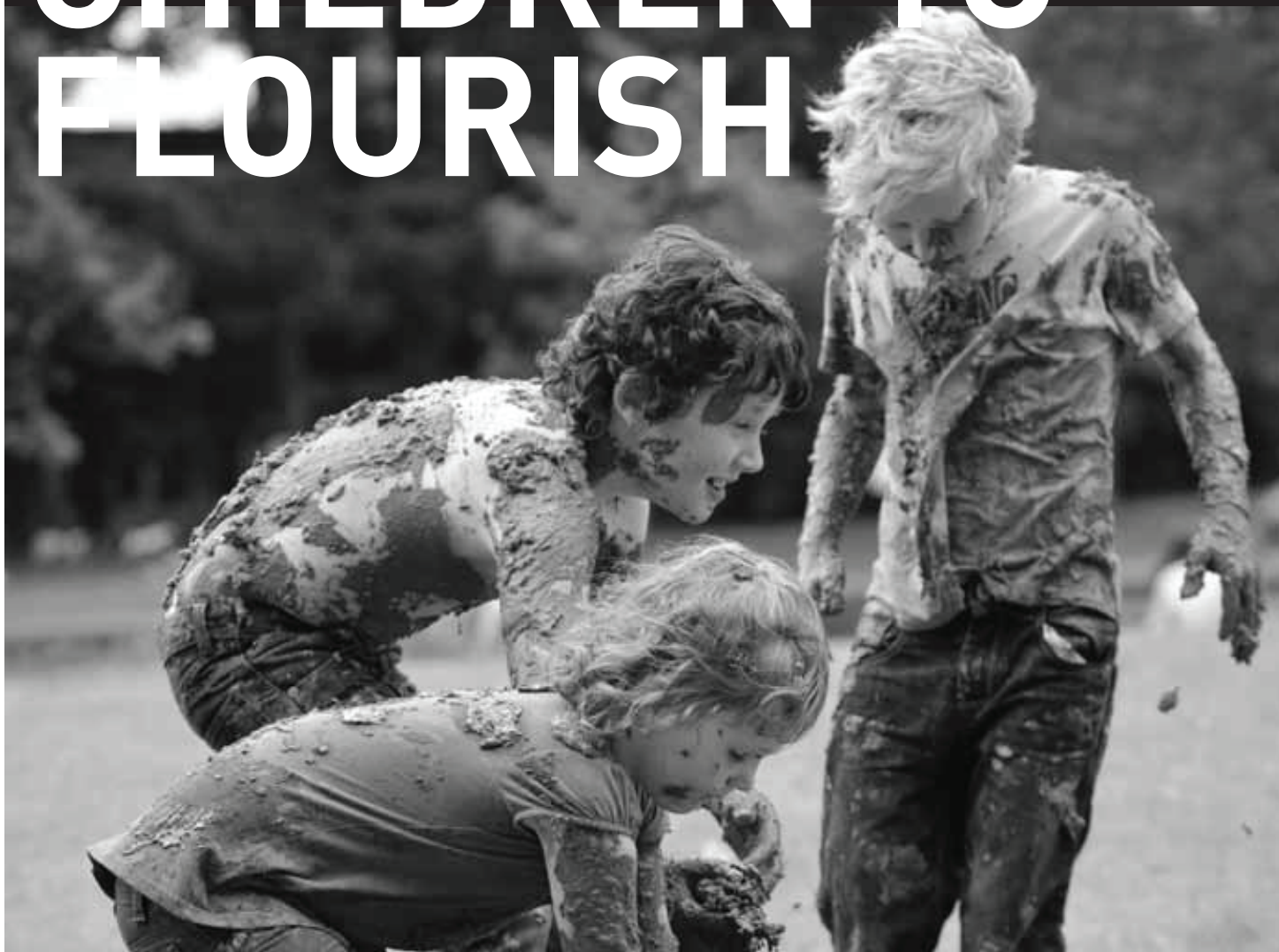
12
OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

14
3 STEPS TO STAY CALM WHEN A CHILD ISN'T

15
NOT AVAILABLE ON THE APP STORE

SEE THE CALENDAR ON THE BACK COVER FOR TIME AND PLACE DETAILS OF OSCAR NETWORK TRAINING AND EVENTS.

THE POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY OF PLAY: HOW PLAY HELPS CHILDREN TO FLOURISH



HERE ARE 8 GOOD REASONS FROM POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY TO FIND TIME EVERY DAY FOR PLAY.

Before we go there I'd like to make a distinction between two types of play

DEEP PLAY: When a child is free to choose and direct the course of play using their imagination, personal preferences and whatever resources come to hand to support this.

SURFACE PLAY: Looks like play but may be constrained by a toy which has to be used in a particular way or a pre-set game with rules or an electronic device which has an inbuilt programme. The child has limited control over the course of this type of play although it may be useful practice for building certain skills.

1. DISCOVERING AND DEVELOPING STRENGTHS

Children choose to play at what interests them and this is a marvellous way to discover what you enjoy and to develop skills in a relaxed and pleasant context. Our strengths are energising and revitalising because we gain so much satisfaction from the process. Our strengths are also our best opportunities for achievement so we gain a sense of competence too.

2. MOTIVATION

Motivation is the power that drives learning. It gives us the persistence to keep going when faced with challenges and the desire to solve any problems and not give up. Effort is known to be a greater predictor of success than measures of ability/intelligence so finding motivation is vital. Motivation is both a set of skills and a mind-set which is developed from experience. Children, who play creatively, using their strengths, learn important lessons for life through their play.

3. MASTERY

Children need a solid experience of success on a regular basis to build their personal sense of self efficacy "I am someone who can do things" Deep play will lead to a child practicing and learning new skills which gives them a regular experience of success and of being able to make things happen independently.

4. POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Did you know we have more "negative" emotions which alert us to threat than positive ones? Consequently we have to work to redress the balance, particularly in a busy world which can be stressful. Professor Barbara Fredrickson's research has identified the 3:1 ratio for wellbeing, that is we need to create 3 times the number of positive emotions and make them last. Play is a fabulous and free way for a child to feel a sense of joy and delight in what they are doing.

5. ENGAGEMENT

Children gradually learn how to focus and sustain their attention and manage distraction. This is a difficult skill to master, made more difficult if the task is too challenging. School often presents such challenges while independent play draws a child in and allows them to manage the process so they stay engrossed. When a child is deeply absorbed in play they experience a state of Flow so time flies by and distractions are ignored. The experience gained through deep play transfers to other areas of life.

6. GROWTH MIND-SET

This concept- originally described by Professor Carol Dweck identifies two views of ability. The Fixed Mind-set assumes that ability/intelligence is finite and has a ceiling. When children who think this way meet a challenge, they are likely to assume the problem lies within them; they assume they have reached their limits and may give up. A Growth Mind-set assumes ability is developed through practice and persistence. Play encourages a growth mind-set as a child is free to be open and creative about how they shape their play. This encourages both persistence and problem solving and allows the play to keep on track so that a successful outcome is achieved.

7. CREATIVITY

Play is free form and the child can take their ideas and experiment with whatever comes

up. The human brain is hugely creative and needs these free opportunities of exploration and experimentation to flourish.

8. COHERENCE

Child development books often compartmentalise children's development for convenience sake. For the real child their learning journey is to take different areas of their experience and process them into a coherent whole. What better way to do this than through play?

SIX WAYS TO ENCOURAGE DEEP PLAY

Make time: Children need the freedom to play which won't easily happen when their schedule is full of structured activities and homework. Look at how to free up time if necessary.

Aim for an hour a day of uninterrupted time or 2 x 30 minutes as a minimum. Children need time to develop an idea and let it run on. More is better of course.

Reduce the reliance on structured toys and equipment that limit a child's ability to use the toy creatively by putting time limits on the use of these toys.

Offer support to younger children who are learning to play creatively and may find deep play more demanding at first. Act as a second in command playmate but offer options when things falter to keep the play going. Don't direct however tempting that may be.

Declutter play spaces: Too many toys can swamp creativity and encourage children to flit from toy to toy without getting the experience of deep play.

Focus on the process not the outcome: Don't look for results or expect to be told what happened or how it went. Play can have a dream like quality which can't easily be described but is none the less important.

IS PRAISING A CHILD GOOD OR BAD FOR THEM?

We assume that enthusiastic words motivate children to try harder.
But when you look at the evidence, it's not that clear-cut.
It all depends on the wording.

A child presents you with their latest artistic creation. It's a painting of a figure with very long thin legs, no body and big hair. It's you. In the corner there's a bit of yellow which you're told is the Sun and beside it some patches of purple paint. If you're being honest you've seen better, but as your child waits for your reaction, what do you say? "That's amazing. It's the best painting I've ever seen. It's completely fantastic." Your child beams as the picture is attached to the fridge door for the rest of the family to see.

But is that really the best thing to have said? We tend to assume that we all enjoy receiving praise, and that it will motivate us to try harder. But when you look at the evidence, it's not that straightforward. It all depends on the wording.

The problem isn't praise, but inflated praise, words like "perfect" or "incredibly good", as opposed to a simple "good". Parents are particularly likely to do this if their child is low in confidence, hoping it will boost their self-esteem. But this could back-fire. It's known that if praise is thought to be insincere, it spoils its effect. There is a greater problem than a child seeing through your

hyperbole, though. There's new evidence suggesting it might make children avoid future challenges.

When children were told they had done an "incredibly beautiful drawing" those with low self-esteem were less likely to choose a challenging task afterwards than those who were told it was a "beautiful drawing". Just one word made a difference. The question, of course, is why. The researchers speculate that inflated praise sets a standard that's too high for them to meet, but this hypothesis hasn't yet been tested.

Praise be

So what is the best way of praising a child? Lead author of the latest paper, psychologist Eddie Brummelman, advises stepping back and thinking about the message you're giving, so that you're not setting standards so high that your child might fear failing to meet them in the future.

What qualities you choose to praise may be a factor. After two decades of research Professor Carole Dweck at Stanford University has found big differences between praising children for their abilities

(telling them how intelligent they are, for example), and praising them for the effort they put in (saying "you worked really hard on that"). In one experiment, when children were either praised for their hard work or for being clever, the "clever" children played safe and chose subsequent tasks they knew how to do, and were also more distressed if they failed. Praising a child's intelligence can teach them that this is a fixed trait that they can't control. It can make them wary of trying anything new in case they don't maintain their high standards.

Dweck recommends focussing on the processes a child goes through to achieve something. "I really admire how you concentrated on that," for instance. If it has gone wrong, criticism needs to be constructive so that they learn how to remedy the problem.

This depends a lot on the age of the child, of course. With pre-school children any kind of praise seems to motivate them, but when they're a bit older subtleties of praise is everything. Psychologist Jennifer Henderlong Corpus gave 9-11 year olds a puzzle to solve and either praised them

for their character, for their results or for the way they approached the task, or alternatively gave them no praise at all. She then engineered it so that they failed the subsequent task, before watching to see what they'd do next. If they'd been praised for their character at the start of the study, they didn't deal with failure well. It actually de-motivated them, but if they were praised for the results or the way they approached the task, they battled on.

Competing interests

What about pointing out how much better they've done than other children? You might think we like nothing better than to be told we're better than everyone else, but again the research suggests it's not that simple.

Studies with adults in the 1970s and 80s showed that this kind of praise did seem to improve the joy people get from the task itself, what is known as intrinsic motivation. But it seems with children it might be different. Children aged 9-11 were given a set of puzzles to complete. Afterwards some were told, "That's great work! You seem to be better at this than most kids!", or "That's among the best work I've seen from someone your age!" Others were congratulated on the progress they'd

made, for example, "Nice job! You've really learned how to solve these!" They were then given a drawing task, but this time with no feedback, so that they were unsure how well they had done before choosing between an easy or a hard task and being asked whether it's fun to work hard.

They found that the praise involving social comparison was in fact worse than no praise at all. It seemed to sap their motivation,

Recently I was in a school playground and overheard a lunchtime supervisor saying 'Well done, that's really good' to a young girl on the autism spectrum. I wanted to reinforce this praise so after the supervisor had walked away I asked the girl what she had done. She stood looking at me with a big smile on her face and said 'I don't know'.

encouraging them to choose easy tasks in the future, maybe for fear that they would lose that top spot. But this only applied if they were uncertain about how well they'd done. When they'd already been given their scores the girls and boys and behaved differently. The boys benefitted from the social comparisons, yet the girls didn't. They seemed to react badly to being told they were doing better than others. They seemed to take from it that what matters is beating other people, rather than getting any satisfaction from the task itself, and so their motivation was reduced.

Note that these studies were all about how praise affected the children in the short-term, rather than the long-term. Those studies would be far more difficult to conduct because you'd have to be certain that every adult was giving the children the right sort of praise for several years. But the evidence we have suggests that praising children for their effort, for and for the way they approached a task, is particularly effective in motivating them. And if you're praising their results, then it seems it is a myth that there's no such thing as too much praise. Over-inflated praise could backfire.

Claudia Hammond BBC



SELF-REGULATION

THE SECOND CORE STRENGTH

THE ABILITY TO SELF-REGULATE IS THE SECOND OF SIX CORE STRENGTHS THAT ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF HEALTHY EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

“Mine! Mine!” The 4-year-old yelled, stamped his feet, grabbed at the toy, pushed his classmate, and finally collapsed to the floor sobbing and inconsolable. This was his third “tantrum” in the last two days.

A just-fed new-born, rocking in the arms of her loving parent, is warm, full, calm, and safe. Her needs are met-for now. But soon, her body will use all of the food; her mother will put her down, and a loud bang will startle her. When this happens, her body tells her - I’m hungry, alone, and in danger. She feels distress and also feels unable to regulate herself. So dependent, her only response is to cry out, hoping that a responsive adult will come to protect and feed her.

Again and again, attentive teachers respond to the needs of the dependent child. When infants and children are incapable of meeting their own needs, they depend upon the external regulation that comes from attentive, caring adults. It is in the context of this loving attention that a special bond grows between the dependent child and the teacher-attachment bonds. A responsive teacher provides the stimulation that helps the child’s brain develop the capacity for creating and maintaining healthy emotional relationships.

At the same time, in these same interactions, other crucial areas of the infant’s brain are being shaped-the stress-response systems.

Responding to Stress

The brain is continually sensing and

responding to the needs of the body. Specialized “thermostats” monitor our internal (for instance, levels of oxygen and sugar in the blood) and external worlds. When they sense something is wrong (that the body is “stressed”), they activate the brain’s alarm systems. These stress-response systems then act to help the body get what it needs.

Much of this regulation takes place automatically-beyond our awareness. But as we mature, our brain requires that we actively participate in our own regulation. When the internal world needs food or water or the external world is overwhelming, or threatening, our body “tells” us. If we thirst, we seek water; when afraid, we prepare to fight or flee. In short, we “self-regulate.” We act in response to the sensations and feelings that arise from our brain’s alarm systems.

When these systems develop normally, we are able to deal with complex and challenging situations with age-appropriate solutions. By adulthood, these should be thoughtful and creative.

When a child’s capacity for self-regulation does not develop normally, he will be at risk for many problems-from persistent tantrums to impulsive behaviours to difficulty regulating sleep and diet.

What helps the stress-response systems develop in an optimal way is repetitive exposure to controllable “challenges.” Every time a child is introduced to something new,

a low-level alarm response is activated. But with repetition comes mastery, and what the brain once interpreted as a potential threat is now familiar and tolerable. It is not bad for the child to experience low levels of “anxiety” or distress when he is in a safe and responsive setting. Indeed, when the child gets a little hungry, there is no need to cry because he now knows that that feeling will go away soon.

(“We have snack time after free play”). Moderate, predictable stress in this responsive, controllable environment leads to resilience. Children become capable of tolerating significant distress. In turn, unpredictable or severe stress can lead to a hyper-reactive stress-response system and a host of problems.

Central to the process of healthy development of stress-response capability is that children learn to read their bodies’ signals.

Understanding Body Signals

Many of the sensations we feel when we are “out of regulation” are clear-thirst, for example. But the body tends to use a common set of “alarm” sensations for many different kinds of potential threats. The alarm response and the resulting feelings caused by frustration are very similar to those caused by fear. A fearful child may act sullen and “angry,” unaware that they are actually anxious about starting in a new classroom. A hungry child may act distracted, irritable, and noncompliant, again unaware that the internal distress they feel is hunger. We all

have had times when we have mislabelled these feelings. Sleep deprivation, illness, physical exhaustion, and family distress are among the things that can activate the alarm response and result in a set of behaviours that are misunderstood by teachers and by the children themselves.

Sometimes, we just can't get what we need right away. We must endure the discomfort related to exhaustion, hunger, thirst, or fear. Learning to tolerate this distress, to correctly label the uncomfortable sensations, and to develop appropriate, mature ways to respond to these signals is central to healthy development. (When you are hungry or tired, you really aren't mad at someone-so you need not act mad. Just remember to eat something between lunch and a late dinner.)

How Self-Regulation Matures

The capacity for self-regulation matures as we grow. Infants are born with an undeveloped capacity to self-regulate. The dehydrated infant cannot use words to ask for water nor can he get water. The infant feels thirst, distress and then cries, dependent upon an attuned adult to meet her needs. The transition from external regulation to self-regulation is one of the most important tasks of growing up.

Healthy self-regulation is related to the capacity to tolerate the sensations of distress that accompany an unmet need. The first time the infant felt hunger, she felt discomfort, then distress and then she cried. An attuned adult responded. And after thousands of cycles of hunger, discomfort, distress, response, and satisfaction, the child has learned that this feeling of discomfort, even distress, will soon pass. An adult will come. The attuned, responsive teacher helps the child build in the capacity to put a moment between the impulse and the action.

As young children learn to read and respond appropriately to these inner cues, they become much more capable of tolerating the early signs of discomfort and distress that are related to stress, hunger, fatigue, and frustration. When a child learns to tolerate some anxiety, he will be much less reactive and impulsive. This allows the child to feel more comfortable and act more "mature" when faced with the inevitable emotional, social, and cognitive challenges of development.

With the capacity to put a moment between a feeling and an action, the child can take time to think, plan, and usually come up with an appropriate response to the current challenge. For example, if you want another turn, wait in line and learn to tolerate the frustration of not getting exactly what you want exactly when you want it.

When to Worry

Many children have difficulty with self-regulation. Their stress-response systems are poorly organized and hyper-reactive. This could be related to many factors, including genetic predisposition, developmental insults (such as lack of oxygen in utero), or exposure to chaos, threats, and violence.

Children with poor self-regulation disrupt an entire classroom. They are often impulsive, hypersensitive to transitions, and tend to overreact to minor challenges or stressors. They may be inattentive or physically hyperactive. These children benefit from the structure, predictability, and enrichment that schools provide. Unfortunately this may not be enough. The degree of attention and nurturing that these children need is often beyond the capacity of a class setting. If these problems are extreme and persistent, or if the behaviour's disrupt the class, the child should be referred for further evaluation.

Helping Children Self-Regulate:

- Model self-control and self-regulation in your words and actions when you are frustrated with a situation.
- Provide structure and predictability. Children with self-regulation problems are internally "unstructured." The more freedom and flexibility they have, the more likely they are to demonstrate uncontrolled behaviour's.
- Anticipate transitions and announce changes in classroom schedules.
- When you can, reward children with good self-regulation capabilities with freedom and flexibility that will offer them opportunities for spontaneous, creative play and learning.
- Try to identify the most "reactive" and impulsive children and keep them apart from each other. Pairing children who face these challenges can escalate the problem.
- Remember that impulsive and aggressive children can create an atmosphere of chaos and fear that inhibit the capacity of other children to learn. Don't be afraid to

immediately redirect inappropriate words and actions. Your actions will make the rest of the children feel safer.

- Seek help. Don't be afraid to point out a child's self-regulation problems with parents or other school personnel. Early identification and intervention can save the child and family years of failure and pain.



SELF-REGULATION: Containing impulses

What it is: The ability to notice and control primary urges such as hunger and sleep, as well as feelings such as frustration, anger, and fear. Developing and maintaining this strength is a lifelong process. Its roots begin with external regulation from a caring parent, and its healthy growth depends on a child's experience and the maturation of the brain.

Why it's important: Putting a moment between an impulse and an action is an essential skill. Acquiring this strength helps a child physiologically and emotionally. But it's a strength that must be learned - we are not born with it.

Signs of struggle: When a child doesn't develop the capacity to self-regulate, she will have problems sustaining friendships, and in learning and controlling her behavior. He may blurt out a thoughtless and hurtful remark, express hurt or anger with a shove or by knocking down another child's work. Just seeing a violent act may set her off or deeply upset her. Children who struggle with self-regulation are more reactive, immature, impressionable, and more easily overwhelmed by threats and violence.

DEFENCE OF BOREDOM

According to the Institute for Social Research, in the years between 1981 and 1997, children lost 12 hours of weekly free time while time spent in structured sports doubled. Time spent on homework increased by 50 percent. And young people's daily screen time now hovers around 7.5 hours per day.

Adults are cramming as much as they can into their children's days under the misguided notion that boredom is a bad thing. Then, in the precious hours of free time they have, children turn to TV, computers, and video games to keep themselves entertained. The result? A generation of children who are adept at following rules -- whether in a classroom, on the soccer field, or on their PlayStation -- but who are at a complete loss when it comes to innovating, designing, tinkering, or doing anything that requires drawing from their own imaginations.

Dr. Richard Ralley, a psychology lecturer who has conducted studies on boredom, says "Boredom can be a good thing. In psychology we think of emotions as being functional... It's the same with boredom, which also has a bad name." So how does boredom serve a purpose in childhood? It essentially tells a child: Think of something to do. Use your own resources. Use your imagination. Go play!

Children in primary school are already worrying about their grades, feeling pressure on playing fields, and failing to get their recommended nine to 11 hours of sleep. And they are increasingly isolated, interacting with friends more and more online, and playing alone in front of screens. As Paddy O'Donnell, a professor of social psychology, points out in *The Times*, "Boredom shouldn't last long if children are in the right environment where they're dragged off either by curiosity or the desire to socialise. It continues only if there's no one to play with or the environment's too restrictive."

In other words, boredom serves its purpose

if children have both the time and space to play -- and preferably, some other children to play with. Race to Nowhere website provides a number of other great action ideas under its "Take Action" section. What would you add to the list? www.racetonowhere.com

"In the space between anxiety and boredom [is] where creativity flourishes."

"Finding things to do when bored is the way children learn to be on their own, to find out what interests them and what isn't boring," says Jonathan Plucker, associate professor of educational psychology at Indiana University. "That's the problem we see with college students. The ones who have a hard time adjusting are those whose parents never transitioned into giving them more responsibility. In the end, we want children who can entertain themselves, pick up a book or find something they want to volunteer for."

Plucker, who has conducted studies of boredom among schoolchildren, advises parents to use a "scaffolding" approach, to "slowly build up" a child's own sense of resourcefulness, rather than suddenly announce "you're on your own" when a lull hits. One approach is to help children write a list of "boredom buster" activities. Eventually, Plucker says, they'll write the list on their own or not even need one.

New research suggests that children who complain of boredom aren't necessarily lazy or slacking off, but are actually in a tense, negative state, says a 2012 study in the journal *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. Frustrated and struggling to engage, they often find themselves unable to focus their attention or get started on satisfying activities.

"We assign a lot of social meaning to boredom," says John D. Eastwood, an associate professor of psychology at York University in Toronto, and lead author of the study. "When children complain of being bored, parents sometimes are threatened, thinking, 'What's wrong with

you?' Or they judge themselves as parents, thinking they failed to bring up their child to have the proper character or skills," he says. Instead, adults should "take a deep breath, step back" and help children explore solutions for themselves, he says.

Many youngsters in the grips of boredom show physiological symptoms of stress, such as an accelerated heart rate and elevated levels of the hormone cortisol, according to research co-written by James Danckert, a psychology professor specializing in cognitive neuroscience at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada. Other studies link boredom to nail-biting and emotional eating.

Boredom also can be a face-saving excuse for children, says Lisa Jacobson, chief executive of Inspirica, a New York tutoring and test-prep company. If they aren't sure what to do with unstructured time, or how to start an unfamiliar task, they may avoid it by claiming boredom. Anxious parents and other caregivers often overcompensate by providing exciting activities sure to grab children's attention, such as an action movie. This is only a short-term fix, Dr. Eastwood says. "One thing you don't want to do is mask the state of boredom with excessive stimulation," he says. "In the long term, it makes us more ripe for boredom," he says, by dulling the ability to focus in quiet surroundings.

Children left to their own devices often default to videogames. Many of the children who play them cite boredom as one reason, according to a 2013 study of 1,254 students in the journal *Motivation and Emotion*.

Planning in advance can help children get through the mental paralysis that comes with boredom. Dr. Markham recommends helping a child make a "Boredom Buster Jar," a bottle of paper slips with the child's ideas for things to do. Suggesting a little drudgery can spur a child's imagination, too. Try saying, "I could use a little help cleaning a cupboard," Dr. Markham says.

RAISING DRIVEN IMMORAL KIDS?

Are results obsessed, league-table crazed state schools churning out pupils who are less moral than their posh public school counterparts? As so often with misconceived hyperbole, this statement contains a kernel of truth, and indeed raises fundamental questions that need answering. After all, don't we all want a more moral society, and to raise our kids to be well-rounded human beings who are not only caring of others, embrace and live by cultural and ethical values and are motivated by more than achievement, status and money?

Exciting psychological research has recently cast light on age-old questions such as what makes people moral, altruistic and kind. The results bear taking seriously. One constant theme is the difference between people mainly motivated by what psychologists call extrinsic rewards, such as high grades, bonuses or status symbols, which is very different to being galvanised by intrinsic values, such as caring for friends and family, or living according to ideals and cultural values. Not surprisingly those who live more by intrinsic values tend to be more moral, generous and other-oriented.

This can even be seen in tiny toddlers. Studies show how they generally want to help adults who, say, drop something or need a door opening. Yet when the toddlers are rewarded for helping, maybe

with a sweet or coloured toy, the rewarded ones just don't help the adults on future occasions. Kids not given extrinsic rewards do however help time and time again, and they do so because they love to help. They don't of course if they are stressed, angry or very worried but do if they are relaxed and able to empathise. Interestingly all kinds of reward circuit's fire up in our brains when we help others, and mood-pleasing hormones swish around our bodies. This is now so apparent that health interventions are being devised which encourage mental health patients to do a number of good deeds a day.

So what's not to like here? We feel better when we do good, other people and society benefit and not only that, our health improves. What the ancient Greeks called The Good Life describes a conjunction of feeling good and being good, each feeding the other. Research shows that when we experience what is now fashionably called wellbeing we not only feel better but we also tend to act more generously. Indeed researchers now distinguish two types of happiness. One is a more hedonistic kind, which might include desiring consumer goods, whether fast cars or designer clothes. Another kind of happiness is what the Greeks called eudemonic, which might include living with a deeper sense of purpose and value. Amazingly people with more hedonistic values, while insisting that they are happy, have worse health than those living a more life-enhancing Good Life. Right down to the genetic cellular level they have higher inflammation and lower immune antibodies.

So what are the lessons that need to be learnt here? Firstly results obsessed head teachers exist in a hugely competitive 'watch your back' society which has become increasingly materialistic and consumerist. But this of course is as true for public school educated high flyers as state-school pupils. We now have an economic system which is harder-edged and tougher to succeed in, and where winning has become increasingly important. Yet this gives rise to higher levels of stress and anxiety, and these emotions work against the psychological systems involved in kindness, generosity and cooperation. After all which of us is that nice when feeling overwhelming pressured and frazzled, let alone when under attack? We evolved to be kind when we feel safe and

relaxed, but to fight or flee and have little empathy when life is stressful or dangerous.

Other research shows how in recent decades narcissism has increased and empathy decreased in the West. We have also learnt that with more extrinsic materialistic values we see higher levels of mental health problems as well as more self-interest. Yet the allure of conspicuous consumption is powerful. In a world where people are judged by wealth, power, status and fame, youngsters might well ask why they should aspire to be a good or feed their soul when they can be filthy rich or famous.

Advertising of course powerfully fuels hedonistic desires that we all harbour. Humans have biological and brain systems that are often in conflict. When feeling calm, loving and loved, trusting and interested in other people we release a hormone called oxytocin, often dubbed the cuddle hormone. Quite different is the hedonism-enhancing desiring system in which another hormone, dopamine, is central. This dopamine system is powerfully targeted by advertising, and is the same system that is hijacked by many recreational drugs. We can all get drawn towards the next fix, even though that new iPhone or other obsession never makes us genuinely happy.

Desire is also a good, and we have evolved with powerful ones, such as for food, and sex. We also need our children to be contenders, and be tough enough to survive in today's world. We seem though to be living in an increasingly competitive stressful and even ruthless climate, as well as a dopamine fuelled high octane buzzy one. This is a world with less time for stillness, for mindful being with oneself and nature, for deep relationships or fulfilling cultural pursuits. This all works against The Good Life and wellbeing. After all what we mean by having a rich life is not having material riches. Yet the strident and beguiling allure of hedonism, power, fame and consuming too often drown out the still small voices that we need to hold onto for our children's physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Graham Music

<http://www.nurturingminds.co.uk/index.php/psychology-research-and-child-development-blog/entry/raising-driven-immoral-kids>

Obstacles to Effective Listening

The first step in improving listening abilities is to **recognize and combat the various obstacles to effective listening**

(Nichols & Stevens, 1957; Nichols, 1961; Murphy, 1987; Roach & Wyatt, 1988; Nichols, 1995).

Preoccupation with Other Issues.

Probably the most serious and most damaging obstacle to effective listening is the tendency to become preoccupied with yourself. Sometimes the preoccupation with yourself centres on assuming the role of speaker. You begin to rehearse your responses, to think of what you'll say to answer the speaker or perhaps a question you want to ask the public speaker. While focusing on yourself, you inevitably miss what the speaker is saying. Similarly, you may become preoccupied with external issues. You think about what you did last Saturday or your plans for the evening. Of course, the more you entertain thoughts of external matters, the less effectively you listen.

Assimilation.

Another obstacle to listening is assimilation: the tendency to reconstruct messages so they reflect your own attitudes, prejudices, needs, and values. It's the tendency to hear relatively neutral messages ("Management plans to institute drastic changes in scheduling") as supporting your own attitudes and beliefs ("Management is going to screw up our schedules again").

Friend or Foe Factor.

You may also distort messages because of the friend or foe factor, the tendency to listen for positive qualities about friends and negative qualities about enemies. For example, if you dislike Fred, then it will take added effort to listen objectively to Fred's speeches or to criticism that might reflect positively on Fred.

Hearing What You Expect to Hear.

Another obstacle is the failure to hear what the speaker is saying and instead hear what you expect. You know that your history instructor frequently intersperses lectures with long personal stories and so when she says, "I can remember ...," you automatically hear a personal story and perhaps tune out.

Prejudging the Speech or Speaker.

Whether in a lecture auditorium or in a small group, avoid the tendency to prejudge some speeches as uninteresting or irrelevant. All speeches are, at least potentially, interesting and useful. If you prejudge them and tune them out, you'll never be proven wrong; at the same time, however, you close yourself

off from potentially useful information. Most important, perhaps, is that you're not giving the other person a fair hearing. Avoid jumping to conclusions before you've heard the speaker; the conclusions that you reach may in reality be quite different from the conclusions the speaker draws.

Rehearsing Your Responses.

Often a speaker may say something with which you disagree. Then, during the remainder of the speech, you rehearse your response or question; you then imagine the speaker's reply to your response, and then your response to the speaker's response. The dialogue goes back and forth in your mind. Meanwhile, you miss whatever else the speaker said. You may even miss the very part that would answer your question. If appropriate, jot down the point or question and go back to listening.

Filtering Out Unpleasant Messages.

Resist the temptation to filter out difficult or unpleasant messages: you don't want to hear that something you believe is untrue or that people you care for are unpleasant, and

yet these are the very messages you need to listen to with great care. These are the messages that will lead you to examine and re-examine your implicit and unconscious assumptions. If you filter out this kind of information, you risk failing to correct misinformation. You risk losing new and important insights.

How to Practice Active Listening with Your Children

What is Active Listening?

Active listening is a little bit like listening on steroids. When we listen passively, we are listening for content - we want to hear and understand the words that are being spoken. Active listening takes listening to a new level where we are trying to understand the complete message. It involves paying attention to what is being said and how it is being said. It involves being aware of body language, voice inflection and overall attitude.

To try to get to the meaning behind the words, active listeners reflect what they are hearing back to the speaker to validate their impressions and the message they are getting.

The Benefits of Active Listening:

Active listeners understand people better and tend to be more productive because they get the full message the first time and don't have to go back for clarification time after time. Because they communicate interest and demonstrate caring for the one sending the message, they tend to build trust and credibility with others. Active listeners also tend to avoid conflict and misunderstanding in their communication with others.

Adults, can find real positives from being active listeners to children. Developing good patterns of communication will help children to feel valued and understood. Once children reach the tween and teen stages and they tend to not communicate as openly, active listening can overcome some of these built-in communication biases.

How to be an Active Listener:

Becoming an active listener is a matter of learning and practicing the basic skills until these skills become a regular part of life.

1. Listen with all of your senses.

So often, we find ourselves listening only to words. But messages are communicated in a variety of ways, not just with the words used. Vocal inflection, body language and other non-verbal communication can often change the meaning of words. For example, the words "Yeah, right" can be positive if spoken with enthusiasm; but if spoken with cynicism, the same words can communicate doubt and lack of trust.

Try these tips to listen with your whole self:

- Look directly at the child when they are speaking to you
- Don't allow other things going on to distract you from giving the conversation your full attention
- Observe body language; notice if they are acting "closed" or "open" as they talk
- Avoid listening with the goal of preparing a response to the initial communication; listen all the way through the child's comments until he or she is done

2. Communicate with your whole self.

When children are communicating with us, they subconsciously observe the clues we give as to whether we are really listening to them. So make sure that you are sending the right signals. One trainer I know uses the acronym "S.O.L.E.R" to remind us of how to be attentive.

- Squarely face the person
- Open your posture
- Lean toward the person speaking
- Eye contact throughout the message
- Relax while listening

3. Reflect the message.

In this skill set, we are trying to validate what we understand is being said. As you are starting to get the message, check to make sure that you understand what is being said. For example, when a child complains

about the impact on their social life from being grounded, you might say something like, "What I am hearing is that being with your friends is very important to you. Is that right?"

If the child says "yes," then the discussion can move forward. If he says, "No, you are not listening," then you can apologize for not getting the message and ask him or her to clarify. Consider using phrases like:

- "It sounds to me like you are saying..."
- "What do you mean when you say...?"
- "What I am hearing you say is..."
- "I gather that you felt _____ when"

Don't just repeat the words they said, but reflect their feelings and the broader message. Parroting back their words will defeat the purpose of reflecting. Try to paraphrase and add in what you have gathered from their feelings.

4. Let the message get all the way out.

So often, particularly with children, we tend to want to jump to the end of the discussion. In the grounding example, we think that the children want us to make a different decision, so we cut them off and let them know we are not changing our mind. They feel devalued when we don't let the conversation get to the end they had in mind. A adult should:

- Avoid jumping to conclusions
- Work to not interrupt the flow of thoughts except to reflect and clarify
- Passing judgment and then tuning out

5. Respond with respect.

Acknowledge that children have real feelings and even if you disagree with their approach or their interpretation of reality, respond to their concerns respectfully. Work hard to not make them feel incapable or to discount their very real feelings



3 STEPS TO STAY CALM WHEN A CHILD ISN'T

“Seeing a child in distress, and particularly if that distress is directed at you, is the most deregulating experience there is. Wild, out of control thoughts of epic disaster come unbidden. Rage, self-doubt and other destructive feelings quickly cloud your thinking. What if you could work to push those thoughts aside, and in a way analogous to meditation, concentrated on being in the moment, concentrated on remembering to breathe? It would help you focus on the child, and on the immediate task before you rather than its global implications.” – Claudia Gold

When a child acts out, lashes out, or is simply in distress, it's natural for us to panic. We're plunged into “fight, flight or freeze” because it feels like an emergency. And if the child's distress is directed at us, then he looks like the enemy.

But it's natural for children to have big feelings, and to act them out. If we “lose it” when the child gets upset, we give her the message that her feelings aren't permitted, which doesn't help her learn to regulate her emotions. Worse, we're saying that we can't control ourselves until she controls herself! Whether she's 5 or 15, that's not what we want to model.

Of course, we know that we can handle any situation better from a state of calm. But when we're in the grip of strong emotions, we aren't thinking. We can't help ourselves. Here are three steps that would help you shift back into calm, AND keep the child from getting upset as often?

STEP 1: GET YOUR OWN EMOTIONS REGULATED

STOP, DROP whatever else you're doing and BREATHE deeply. Reduce the pressure: Remind yourself that there is no emergency. No one is dying.

Change Your Thoughts: Say a little mantra

in your mind: “She's acting like a child because she IS a child. I'm the grown-up here.”

Physically release your tension: Notice where you're holding tension in your body and shake it out. Take a deep breath and blow it out. Make a loud (but nonthreatening) sound. Often, water helps ground us. Hold your hands under running water, or get a drink of water.

Be Here Now. If you can bring yourself into the present moment, your upset will drop away. That's because when we're upset, we're actually over-reacting -- we're triggered from the past (“My parents would have smacked me for saying such a thing!”) or frightened of the future (“My child is going to be a sociopath!”). In this moment, if you can let all that go, there's no emergency.

STEP 2: SHIFT THE ENERGY

Make things emotionally safe. Say “We're having a hard time, Sweetie. Let's try a Do-Over.”

Empathize. Acknowledge the child's perspective. “Seems like you want _____. “ Find the common ground. “You need _____ And I need _____. What can we do to solve this?”

Connect. In this moment, what action would be healing? Anything else can wait. Help the child get emotionally regulated. Kids usually do this best by crying in the safety of our presence. Now that you're calm, you can offer your compassion to help him feel safe enough to cry. Breathe your way through this, reminding yourself that his tears are his way of opening his heart to reconnecting.

STEP 3: LEARN THE LESSON

Learn. When you're calm, reflect on what you can learn from what happened. How

can you support yourself to stay more emotionally regulated? (Allow more time, get more sleep, fewer commitments, see things from the child's perspective?)

Teach. Later, when you and the child feel calm and connected, say “We had a hard time today, didn't we? I'm sorry I got upset. I guess I was worried. I am working hard not to yell. What can each of us do differently next time?”

Change. If this is a recurring situation, make a list of possible solutions and start trying them. Life is too short to endure the same problems over and over again.

CHECKLIST FOR RESILIENCE CHILDREN

The following items were used in the International Resilience Project as a checklist for perceptions of resilience in children.

THE CHILD

- has someone who loves him/her totally (unconditionally).
- has an older person outside the home she/he can tell about problems and feelings. is praised for doing things on his/her own.
- can count on her/his family being there when needed.
- knows someone he/she wants to be like.
- believes things will turn out all right.
- does endearing things that make people like her/him.
- is willing to try new things.
- likes to achieve in what he/she does.
- feels that what she/he does makes a difference in how things come out.
- likes himself/herself.
- can focus on a task and stay with it.
- has a sense of humour.
- makes plans to do things.

For more information:
<http://www.boingboing.org.uk>



Thanks for sharing @mikkelmoller.



We have included a sheet of stickers. We would love it if you could send us some of your own Not available on the App Store photos. More sheets could be purchased from the OSCAR Network at \$2 a sheet, or alternatively you could make your own from templates available on: <http://aboutthesame.info/notonappstore.pdf>



OSCAR NETWORK TRAINING AND EVENT CALENDAR TERM 3 2014

EVENT/TRAINING	DATE	TIME & PLACE	COST (GST INCLUDED)
Cluster & "Inclusion"	Wednesday 30 July	Cluster: 10am – 11.30am Inclusion: 11.30am – 1pm Phillipstown Community Centre 39a Nursery Road, Phillipstown	Free
Health & Safety 1 OR Employment Matters	Tuesday 5 August	9.30am – 12 noon Avebury House 9 Eveleyn Couzins Ave, Richmond	\$35 members \$90 non-members
Emergency 1 OR Management Forum FREE	Thursday 7 August	6.30pm – 9.00pm Tea provided from 6pm Training at 6.30pm Avebury House 9 Eveleyn Couzins Ave, Richmond	\$35 members \$90 non-members
Full & Refresher First Aid MediTrain CYF approved	Saturday 9 August	Full: 8.30am – 4.30pm Refresher 8.30am – 12.30pm St Columba's Parish Centre 452 Main South Rd, Hornby	Full: \$175 each session Refresher: \$98
Recycling Junk OR Older Children	Saturday 23 August	9.30am – 12.30pm Avebury House 9 Eveleyn Couzins Ave, Richmond	\$35 members \$90 non-members
Child Protection	Wednesday 3 September	10am – 12 noon Avebury House 9 Eveleyn Couzins Ave, Richmond	\$35 members \$90 non-members
Older Children	Wednesday 17 September	9.30am – 12.30pm OSCAR Network 25 Disraeli Street, Addington	\$35 members \$90 non-members
Child Protection	Wednesday 24 September	6.30pm – 9.00pm Tea provided from 6pm Training at 6.30pm Avebury House 9 Eveleyn Couzins Ave, Richmond	\$35 members \$90 non-members

Please don't let cost be a barrier to staff attending - contact pam@oscornetwork.org.nz for staff sponsorship

THE FIVE COMMANDMENTS FOR HOLIDAY PROGRAMME PLANNING

1. Most Holidays Programmes have a written plan available a few weeks prior to the programme - it may not contain every detail but it should give caregivers and children a clear impression of what to expect every day.
2. Whatever you plan should be 90% certain of happening on the day it is scheduled. Caregivers and children look at your plans and in some cases caregivers rely on it to convince children that they will enjoy coming to your programme. Weather is probably the only reason that is an acceptable excuse of a change of plan.
3. Different ages can play together and like doing the same things but not all the time. This will depend on individual children and the activity; however make sure your older children are offered some activities that are geared towards their level of ability.
4. You definitely will not be able to please all of the children all of the time. Realistically it can take a week, not just one day, to cover a good variety of activities. The more children who attend your programme the harder it is to provide attention to individual needs and interests. If a lot of children aren't interested in something you've organized - don't worry it happens to even the most experienced planners.
5. Always, always, ALWAYS have back-up activities. You may have planned a fantastic programme but the children who attend aren't interested or they're too tired, or they may not like being mixed up age wise, or what sounded like a great idea just isn't working. Staff need to be FLEXIBLE and change to fit in with what the children want. Otherwise you'll have a bunch of malcontents who are not having a good time.