

Ep #64 Increasing teaching opportunities

This is episode 64. In this episode, we will be discussing teaching interactions and the things that I learned from professional parents. So let's begin.

Smarter Parenting welcomes you to our podcast series, The Parenting Coach for ADHD. Here to heal and elevate lives is your Parenting Coach, Siopé Kinikini.

Hello everyone. How is everyone doing? I hope everybody is doing great. I am doing fantastic, and actually, today is an important day, because I want to discuss with you what I learned from working with professional parents. And what I mean by professional parents, I'm talking about group home parents who have made a career, made their lives in working with children, troubled children, and helping to shape their behaviors using the Teaching-Family Model.

And there are wonderful things that I learned by observing and working with them that I want to share with you. Before we begin talking about this, I do want to give a shout out to our sponsors, the [Utah Youth Village](#). We here at Smarter Parenting are super grateful for the support that they give us in order to provide these podcasts. I've been so happy to communicate with a lot of you, actually, who have contacted us for [individual coaching](#).

It's been a little bit of a fiasco in organizing and getting everything ready. However, at the same time, we are learning a lot, and we actually are excited to continue to reach out to people around the world. This has been a really kind of a crazy ride for me, because in being able to communicate all of these wonderful things that I've learned over the years, and also that I've been able to observe from other people who are using the Teaching-Family Model.

We have also been able to share this with people through the podcast, and really bless their lives and provide them with some insight and some strategies that they can use with their own children. What I do want to talk about today are two group home parents that I worked with. Now, in the Teaching-Family Model, they're called family teachers. And their role in a group home is to act as the parents. They are usually a married couple.

They share responsibilities in the home, but children are brought into a group home setting, usually having been removed by the court system, and they're there to learn skills in order to reintegrate them back into their home environment, and to help them become successful as adults. So this is a way that we can keep families together by providing a group home setting, and helping them learn these skills so they can return home and be with their parents and their siblings.

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The group home parents that I worked with were all fantastic, and I worked with quite a few, but I do want to focus on two specific group parents that I worked with. They were just fantastic in their approach, and in their ability to help children. [Now the component of working with children with ADHD is very, very common in group home settings.](#) And usually a group home would consist of anywhere from eight to 12 boys in the home, that they would care for in helping them along the path of therapy and learning life skills. And learning behavioral skills at the same time.

So as you can imagine, when you have a home filled with like 12 young men, it can be pretty chaotic in there. I mean, there is a lot going on in a home with teenagers that are roughly around the same size, and a lot is going on. So watching these group home parents work was actually pretty magical. Their ability to address issues as they arose, because all of these boys had behavioral problems. And when it came to ADHD, that seemed to be a very common issue among a lot of the boys, that they were working with. There would always be some other things going on, but ADHD seemed to be fairly prevalent.

When I first initially started working with these parents, I remember sitting down after we had our family meeting, which was a meeting where we all met as a family and discussed what was going on in the home, and the rules, and being sure everybody was on the same page. I met with the parents, and we were sitting there talking, and we were talking about teaching interactions.

[And what I mean by teaching interactions, teaching interactions means those opportunities we have to teach, when we are interacting with the youth and we're actually teaching them a behavioral skill.](#) And one of the things that he had said to me, the father had said to me was, "Well, every opportunity, every engagement, every conversation is a teaching interaction." It made me really, really embrace that concept. That regardless of what we are doing with our children, every opportunity that we are with them is an opportunity to teach them something. [It's either to teach them a very specific skill or to reinforce a skill that we've already taught them.](#) So I watched them actually during the course of the next few months as they engaged with this, with the kids that they were working with. What I found is that there were very two distinct ways that they interacted with the boys in the home. First, they would overtly teach a behavioral skill.

So if they were teaching a skill that you find on the [Smarter Parenting website](#), which would be [Observe and Describe](#), or [Effective Communication](#), they would actually sit down and go through the step. Teach them how to do it. [Role-play](#) it with them until they got it. They actually would teach them. So this was a very overt way of teaching them. Very specific way of teaching them the mechanics, and talking about the skill itself. Then what I found was in other instances when they were engaging with the youth, they would teach those skills, but they would teach them not like that, but they would remind them of the skills that they had previously learned. In many ways they taught, which usually took extreme focus.

And then in their other engagements with the youth, when they came home, during family meetings, during any time that they communicated with the youth, they would focus on those

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very specific skills to reinforce them in everything that they were doing throughout their lives. So let's take for example the idea of Effective Communication. I watched this family, these professional parents actually teach these kids how to Effectively Communicate, specifically one boy, how to Effectively Communicate. Where you're making eye contact, you're repeating back what you hear for clarification. I mean, they just went through the steps, and they sat down and they actually went through it. They Role-played it. They practiced it until he was able to do it on his own.

Then what they did was during the week and during the day, whenever there was an opportunity that they could engage with him, whenever he was there, they would remind him of what he learned. They would say, "Hey, do you remember, we used Effective Communication." And when the young man acted out, or he had difficulty with something in expressing his feelings, they actually would go back and remind him again. "Remember, we talked about Effective Communication, let's just revisit that." And it wasn't like they were doing a whole teaching intervention like they had done initially. It actually was just a reminder in kind of helping guide him along. As I watched them do this with various skills, because they did this with Problem Solving, they did for different boys. I noticed that they actually spent more time in the reminding and reinforcing area than they did in the actual let's sit down and learn this skill.

So they would learn the skill, learn the skill, but then they would spend a lot more time developing the nuanced parts of it with the youth, by communicating with them about it, reminding them of the steps, practicing those steps over again. And so, it was really fascinating to watch them work, because every boy in the home would have very specific skills that they needed to improve and that they needed to further integrate into their being. And so they were very aware of the skills that each of the boys needed, and they would adjust.

Every opportunity in that home was a teaching interaction, was a teaching opportunity. Whether or not it was sitting down with them at dinner, and communicating, whether or not they were just in the home together, doing chores. All of those are a skill that you have previously taught. I loved those group home parents. I'm not going to mention their names, because I haven't asked them for permission, but they were the initial family that I began working with.

In fact, I learned so much with just watching them interact with the boys, that I started to see how they made all of these changes happen. So again, I just want to reinforce what he had talked about, that every opportunity you have to engage with your youth, any interaction is actually a teaching interaction. You can teach, you can remind them, you can prompt them, you can do all these things in addition to just sitting down and teaching them the skill. And in fact, a lot of the reminding and in the other area, was more powerful because you were actually bringing them back into focus while they were experiencing something that was difficult, a difficulty emotion, or a difficult situation. Then they saw how the skill that they sat down and learned should be integrated into their new wellbeing. It was amazing to watch. Absolutely amazing to watch, and to see them work through that.

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Every opportunity and this is one thing I do want to drive home to you, is that every opportunity you have to interact with your child is an opportunity to teach. It's a teaching interaction. And if you're teaching your child a skill, so sitting down and going through each of the skills and writing things down and practicing it, and you're sitting down and you're going through each of the steps. That's one part of the teaching. And then the other part is integrating it into normal life by prompts, by reminding them, "Hey, we practiced the skill. Let's practice it again", or, "You're struggling right now. Remember how we dealt with this, by learning that skill.

Now how can we use that in order to help you move forward and to progress? So, every opportunity is an opportunity to teach. Now, the other group home family that I worked with, they were fantastic as well. They were a really, really amazing, one of the young men in the home had ADHD in addition to some sensory issues. So they initially thought it was autism, but it seemed he was higher functioning, so he did well in school and yet he had these behaviors that just seem to be very difficult for him to manage around the home.

For one thing, he would walk around the home making very strange noises, just out of the blue, almost like ticks, like he had a tick. He would make these noises like screaming noises, and clicking noises with his mouth, and he would be like. He would do those type of noises, which annoyed all the other family members in the group home. It ended up being a very difficult thing for these boys to control themselves. They just became angry and resentful. They did know like this young man, they were struggling to work with him. They were struggling to remain patient because he would just walk around and make these loud noises. One of the other things that he struggled with was he would actually speak super loud, like more loud than you should when you're communicating.

He just had a very loud tone, loud voice so you could hear him anywhere in the home, in the group home. And so these teaching parents actually were helping him learn appropriate ways to respond and learning other soothing and calming techniques in order to deal with his over behaviors. In addition, they were also working with the other boys on how to control their emotions and their feelings and also to [Follow Instructions](#) in dealing with this difficult situation.

Now when I met with them in during our team meeting and during the team meeting, we all just, the adults are in there and we're talking about the best ways that we can proceed. One of the things that this group home taught me was the importance of integrating our teaching to everyone that is involved in the home. So if there's a child that has struggling with a very specific behavior, how teaching skills to other members of the family will be helpful just as much as teaching skills to the one who is acting out.

[And these teaching skills look differently because you're teaching them how to deal with their feelings of frustration and anger, and whatever they're feeling because of this misbehavior, you're teaching them how/ they should respond and what they should do.](#) And so in watching them work together, it was fascinating to see them teaching a very specific skill set to the one child who needed correction, but also a different skill set to the other ones that were around.

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Now, if we take the advice of the previous group home parents, every opportunity is an opportunity to teach. Every opportunity is an opportunity to engage and to reinforce skills that you've initially taught. And this is exactly what this other group home parents did was they would teach these skills and they would be constantly reminding the other boys, okay, we've practiced what you need to do when you're starting to feel frustrated or upset. So let's go ahead and practice that. Okay, so he's making that noise and it's annoying you. So let's practice what's going on. At the same time, they would be teaching to the young man who was acting out and saying, "Okay, you are behaving this way. What do you need to do instead? What are the behaviors we practiced and that we Role-played together that you need to adopt and use instead?"

It is artfully beautiful to see this interaction in a family where parents are just so aware that every opportunity is an opportunity to teach, right? If we as parents approached every interaction we have with our child with that mindset, it really does shift the script in our engagement with our children because we have a very specific purpose in our engagement. It's no longer just a, Hey, how are you doing? And boom, boom, boom. But we come to the relationship with this idea that, "Hey, I'm going to reinforce again what I want my child to do, what I want them to learn during this communication or during this engagement."

And that actually helps to strengthen their ability to follow through with what it is that you're teaching. If you are a parent that is only teaching a skill by sitting them down and walking through it, and teaching them the steps and it's a one-time event, then you missing out on the real power, which is continually using that as a reminder for them during their lives when they need to implement those skills.

Because, we usually hear Smarter Parenting tell you to teach the skill when your child is calm, and at a neutral time, so you can Role-play it. That's a wonderful thing. But when your child is tantruming, you want them to use the skill that you've been practicing during that calm time. You want to draw all that information into the new situation, so they can adapt and adjust and do things a lot better.

For me, personally, this is the artful part of parenting. This is the beautiful part of parenting. And this is actually the powerful part of teaching these skills and integrating it into real life. So we can give you all the skills and you can practice it in this one-time event, or this two-time event where you're sitting down and expecting them to just adopt it and use it during these other times when it may be more difficult. However, to artfully bring that into their reality, it's going to take you prompting them and approaching every interaction as an opportunity to teach.

So before bedtime, remind them of the skill. During dinner, remind them of the things that you've practiced. When they get home, remind them of whatever skill that you are focusing on. You want to constantly bring that into their everyday part of life in order for them to be successful.

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And by reminding them, practicing it with them, actually bringing that skill into their regular life is going to make the largest impact on changing and shaping their behavior.

So, as a parent, that's what I want you to take away. I want you to take away that every opportunity you have to communicate and interact with your child is a teaching opportunity. And that when you are meeting with your child, whatever skill you are teaching, you want to continually reinforce it, by reminding them, by practicing it, by engaging with them, and having it become a part of the conversation in your interaction with your children. By doing this, everything gels together, and you're going to find that your children's behaviors will change a lot faster than if you just teach them the skill and expect them to just adopt it and use it in every situation.

Remember, children need that guidance, and you as the parent need to help guide them along that process, right? Otherwise, you're just teaching a skill, and they're like, okay, that's nice and it's independent, but it's not connected to anything in their life. You need to bring that over to their life, and help them reinterpret it into what is happening in their life so they can adopt it and use it.

Again, I'm so grateful for all the parents that I've worked with throughout the years, and throughout the, however long I've been doing this forever. I feel like I've been here a hundred years. They have taught me so much, but these are some of the takeaways that I've taken from them in watching them, observing them, and communicating with them was that every opportunity is a teaching opportunity, and if you have a child with a problem behavior, it's good to teach that child, but it's also good to teach to everyone else in the family how to adapt and adjust to what it is.

And it doesn't have to be the same skill, it just has to be a skill to help them deal with it as well. So you're not just focused on the one child with the issue. [You're focused on helping everybody along so they can all support each other.](#)

Wonderful, wonderful to be with you today. Presenting this information to you actually feels really liberating for me, because I feel like in many ways, a lot of this stuff are things that I've carried around with me, and I've been able to share them with the few families that I've worked with on a one-on-one basis. But to be able to present this information to you through a podcast, it's powerful to me. And especially when I receive messages and notifications from people who are listening to the podcast, from all over the world, I find it so liberating, and so powerful, that I'm able to share this with them, and that they're able to adapt it and adopt it and use it in their own families and in their own lives.

It actually gives me great pleasure to be able to do that, and so I am super grateful to share all the things that I'm learning with you, in order to help you and your family improve. Now, if you haven't signed up for a free 15-minute session, please do. [Sign up for a 15-minute free session on the Smarter Parenting website for coaching, and I will go ahead and coach you.](#) I will send

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you an email, we'll talk about some of the things going on in your families, and then we can actually narrow down how you're going to approach teaching new skills and new behaviors to your children.

That's it for me for now, and I hope to hear from you guys through the coaching sessions that we will be having, and feel free to reach out to me, but that's it for me, and I hope you have a great week. Bye-bye.

RESOURCES MENTIONED IN THIS PODCAST

[Behavior skills of the Teaching-Family Model](#)

[Ep #46: Understanding the ABC's of Behavior](#)

[Ep #47: Mastering Observe and Describe](#)

[Ep #48: What it takes to change behavior](#)

[Ep #49: Compound effect of Effective Communication](#)

[Ep #50: Changing behavior through praise](#)

[Ep #51: Finding Success with Preventive Teaching](#)

[Ep #52: How to fix negative behaviors](#)

[Ep #53: The importance of Following Instructions](#)

[Ep #54: Teaching kids to make better decisions](#)

[Ep #55: Reducing bad behavior with Effective Negative Consequences](#)

[Ep #56: Reinforcing good behavior using Effective Positive Rewards](#)

[Ep #57: Teaching kids to Accept No Answers without issue](#)

[Ep #12: How to teach behavior skills](#)

[Ep #14: Compound effect of behavior skills](#)

[Ep #22: Mastering ADHD behavior skills](#)

[Ep #42: What parents need to teach--behavior skills](#)

[Vlog: Emotion control for kids | Managing emotion with self-regulation strategies](#)

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