

PARENT SUGGESTIONS 'Parenting Exceptional Children' Session 1

24th January 2025

1. Related to the topic 'Understanding and Connecting with your Children' what has worked for you as a parent?

- Understanding myself. I meditate daily so that I am the best version on myself to meet them where they are at, even when they are at their most distressed/dysregulated. Training courses to help me understand neurodiversity and practical tips to help. Understanding long her sensory preferences and supporting them. Helping her with anxiety. Being in her world, whatever her favourite topic of interest or toy or game is. Spending time one on one. Lots of OT deep pressure work: hugs, rough play, yoga ball massage. Spending time in nature together. Lots of messy play.
- Food! It's a comfort for him and he sometimes goes long periods without eating, sometimes the whole school day. He is dyslexic and since little always enjoyed is reading to him at night and still does at age 13. It's a nice connection after sometimes a fraught day.
- To be child focused and to focus on my own selfcare.
- Making home a welcoming place for the kids and their pals so kids would want to come. Preparing nice snacks and backing off . When daughter younger having an activity as a back up for something to do if there was a lull in play date. Arts and crafts . Baking painting mugs with sharpies etc . Making friends with parents in class and inviting kids over every Friday if she didn't get an invite .
- Being gentle and empathetic with my son when discussing something that is difficult for him. If I don't have an answer for him in the moment, I tell him that we will do some research.
- Understanding that they are not being obstructive or willful is really helping. trying to help them to name their emotions. acknowledging that they are dysregulated (using appropriate language). trying to reassure that I'm here to help. telling them when I am overwhelmed and that they need to give me space. apologising when I have been shouting. giving them fidgets or blankets or headphones - or glasses of water, ice, things to chew.
- hugging them, reading for them, watching movies, listening about fortnite.
- Being alongside my children so that working with them and avoiding power struggles. Listening to them and making sure they know that their needs are important and valid.
- Sometimes we lie in bed and draw shapes/ letters on each other's backs. A gentle way to begin the morning. My 8yo loves it.

2. What resources have you found useful? (e.g. groups, books, websites, social media accounts...)

- Training courses: Middletown centre for autism. Facebook support group. Parent led support group in school. The incredible five point scale book. Social stories book. ASIAM. The everyday OT.
- Barnardos groups and other adoption groups
- websites, books and webinars
- Did an anxiety course years ago . Meet a few parents at some of the autism courses years ago and kept in touch . Some of my pals have kids in the spectrum and I hear what issues they have .
- social media accounts / podcasts (ADHD Chatter, Fabulous Pharmacist, Gabor Mate, Diary of a CEO, Fearn Cotton The Happy Place, ADDitude, ADHD Love, Dr James Kustow, Russel K Barkley's books).

- social media is good, but it can be very conflicting and overwhelming, i like to join ADHD online parent mornings when I can, as it is good to chat to other parents.
- Naomi Fisher webinars, autism groups in Ireland on Facebook.
- Dr Clara O'Byrne- webinars. Family carers Ireland webinars and training.