

PARENT SUGGESTIONS: Parenting Exceptional Children

Session 1, 11th March 2026

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

- The more communication that can happen the better, my son is a little human not a baby and has their own opinion on what our family needs and wants.
- I try to validate and see her, listen to her but a lot of what i do has its faults that are picked up on and amplified by my daughter so i either get it right all the time or not at all.
- bribery, patience and hugs
- Activities together, or one on one together Best friend
- Empathy , open ended questions , choosing my words carefully especially if a request so could you, can I count on you
- We had an OT ax which highlighted his sensory processing difficulties and I feel a lot of these strategies are starting to help e.g. weighted blanket/deep pressure massage/special cushion. Our son is sensory seeking so he loves being outdoors. We will try and spend a lot of time in nature/outside. Quiet one to one time helps e.g. he loves listening to us read. He also loves swimming.
- Understanding that home is my daughter's safe place and respecting her need for downtime and sensory regulation there. She prefers indoor activities and I try to meet her where she is rather than pushing too hard. Movement and sensory supports have helped greatly – she uses a spinning chair, peanut ball, mini rebounder trampoline and enjoys extended bath time playing in water. Connection through shared interests works best for us. She loves Lego, creative illustration and making her own graphic books. She enjoys word games with me like Wordle and Wordfeud, as well as dance and drama. I try to make her speech and language therapy play based and practice a little each day letting her pace herself. We also use humour, music and dancing to help with transitions such as getting up in the mornings. I make no demands of her on pick up I let her lead. I will give her a crunchy salty snacks like crisps and a fresh waterbottle with a straw for proprioceptive input. If she wants to tell me about her day then or not its fine. She'll tell me when we're in bed. We cosleep in a king size bed she wont sleep in a room yet. Thats fine she wont always want to share a bed with me I'm making the most of the snuggles while I can. I like her close to monitor her beside me is easier as she is prone to fevers. She loves the motion of the car, sometimes she just wants to listen to music in the ride home and be quiet and not talk till we reach home. Other times she's full of beans and chat. I have actively learned to notice when her nervous system is overwhelmed and to "hold space" rather than escalate demands. When things go wrong, I try to gently reflect afterwards and understand possible triggers or stressors. She is usually able to tell me in her own time. Prioritising one-to-one time, affection with lots of deep pressure hugs and emotional safety has strengthened our bond and helps her regulate. It wasnt always this easy I had to find this rhythm through trial, error, curiosity and tons of patience. I dont always get it right meltdowns still occur.
- Reducing demands. Trusting and believing my child, learning to accept her differences.
- Picking our battles - trying not to stress over the small things that get to us
- For me, connection is so important. My son and I have a very strong bond. I know that he trusts and feels safe with me, and he feels safe and happy at home. This really helps to repair after meltdowns/challenging behaviour and he knows that I love him no matter what.
- Meeting them where they are their topics of conversation, their timings, and trying not to take it all personally!
- Playing boardgames, etc. with them; sitting with them while they play video games; going on walks

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

- OT
- Lucena/Camhs, ISPPC course on supporting anxiety teens
- this course and also looking at zones of regulation
- Not neurodivergent but How to Talk To Your kids so They Will Listen
- ADHD Ireland website
- Im a visual learner I retain information engaging this way Instagram accounts I find helpful: • Bright Minds Neurodevelopment • Dr Josh Madsen • Dr Connor Bor • The Kinected OT • Occupational Therapy ABC • Healthy Kids Happy Kids • PxDocs • The Optimistic OT • Do Autism Differently • Brain and Body Health (Dr Eric Hansen) • OTE in Paediatrics • The Holistic SLP Podcasts / YouTube: • ADHD Chatter (Alex Partridge)
- General groups on FB, camhs
- Specs bray
- We did a course with the HSE on parent emotion coaching which was very helpful. I use the AsIAm website and follow Caterpillar Clinic.
- Books: Positive Parenting (John Sharry); Mindful Parenting for ADHD (Mark Bertin); 10 Days to a less defiant child (Jeffrey Bernstein); Course: Parents Plus for ADHD