

# KIDS WANT TO DO WELL

A SIMPLE, COMPASSIONATE WAY TO UNDERSTAND AND PROBLEM SOLVE CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

## The Big Reframe

Old Belief: Kids do well if they want to  
New Belief: **Kids want to do well**

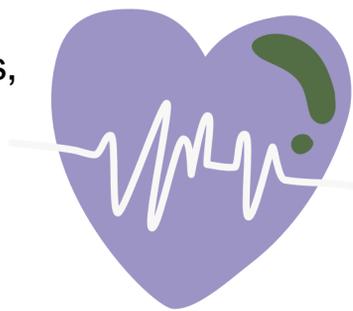
When a child isn't meeting expectations, the question isn't:

*"How do I make this stop?"*

The question is:

*"What's getting in the way?"*

**Challenging behavior is information.** It tells us the child is stuck.



## Behavior is a Signal

Think of behavior like a fever. A fever isn't the illness; it's a sign something is wrong.



In the same way, explosions, refusal, shutdown, and power struggles are signals of "**stuck spots**" and lagging skills.

If we only treat the behavior (punishments, consequences, threats), the root problem stays.

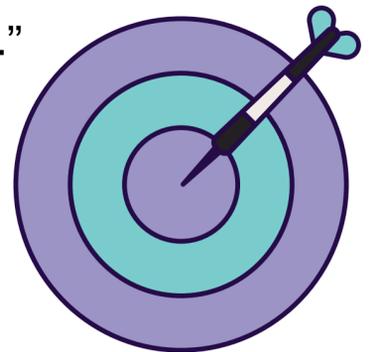
## What Are "Stuck Spots"

Stuck spots are **specific expectations** a child is having trouble meeting. Helpful wording sounds like:

- "Difficulty getting off the video game after the 90-minute limit."
- "Difficulty starting homework after school."

Unhelpful wording sounds like:

- "Melts down when told no."
- "Has an attitude."
- "Refuses to listen."



**Clear wording** keeps kids from feeling attacked and keeps adults focused.



## Consequences don't Work

Many kids already want to do better. If consequences worked, the problem would be solved by now.

Instead, consequences often increase stress and power struggles, damage trust, and teach fear not skills.

**Skills don't grow under pressure.**

## The Collaborative Problem-Solving Flow

1- **Getting Curious:** Understand the child's perspective.

*"I noticed this is hard. What's going on for you?"*

Listen without fixing, correcting, or debating.

2- **The Grown-Up Side:** Share why the issue matters to you.

*"My concern is that when this happens, it affects..."*

This is about safety, learning, health, or relationships. Not control.

3- **Team Plan:** Solve the problem together.

*"I wonder if there's a way to meet both of our concerns..."*

The goal isn't perfection. It's progress and partnership.

This approach builds communication, flexibility, and emotional skills. It strengthens the relationship where real change happens.

