

# Making Written Information Accessible To All Families: Helping Those With Low English Literacy

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Building on Family Strengths Conference 2007

# A Simple Request



- Tammy Taylor; Family Support Partner, Marion County, Oregon has an idea
- Can we bring the information from “The Explosive Child” to more parents, those unwilling or unable to read the book themselves?



# The Explosive Child: Collaborative Problem Solving by Dr Ross Greene

- Center for Collaborative Problem Solving
  - [www.explosivechild.com](http://www.explosivechild.com)
- Copyright
  - Applies to the book, as well as the Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) approach
  - Request presenters to stress that they are not certified/licensed in CPS
  - Request presenters to share where participants can get direct information about CPS
- Collaborative Problem Solving Institute
  - [www.cpsinstitute.org](http://www.cpsinstitute.org)

# Using English as a Second Language (ESL) Reading and Context Strategies

- Get Their Attention!
  - Emphasize relevance of material to students
  - Visual Cues and Stimulation
  - Kinesthetic (“hands on”)
- Small Bits of Information
  - Present a few key concepts at a time
  - Give time to process



# More ESL Strategies

- Relate Technical terms in Simpler Words
  - Use technical terminology, and give definition
  - Repeat throughout curriculum until students have a grasp of technical phrases, without the definition
- Active Involvement
  - Use manipulatives
  - Engage students in small group discussions

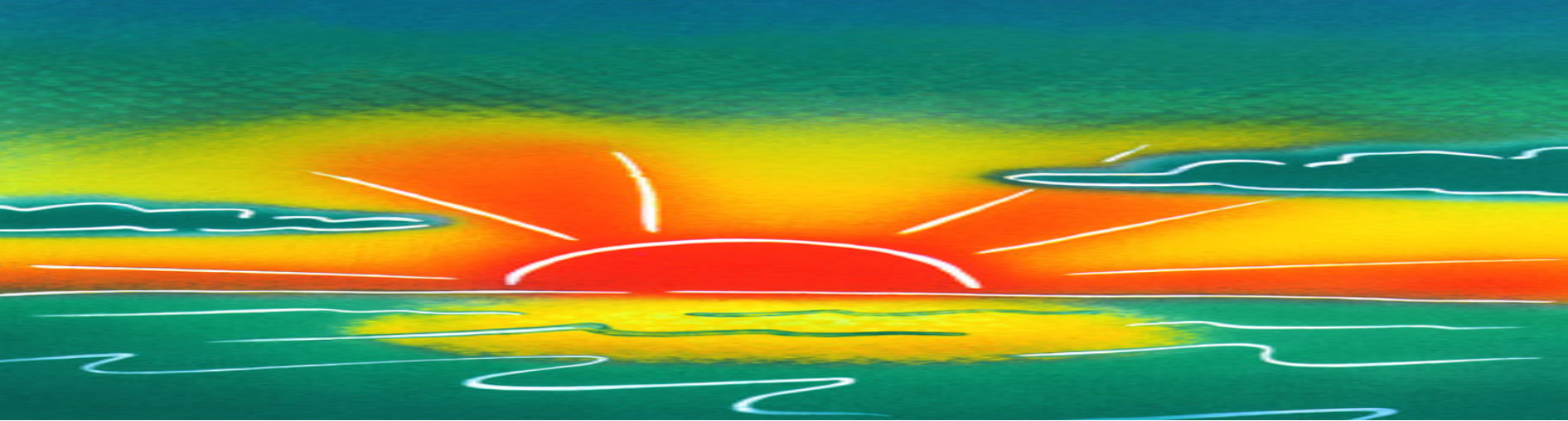


# My Interpretation



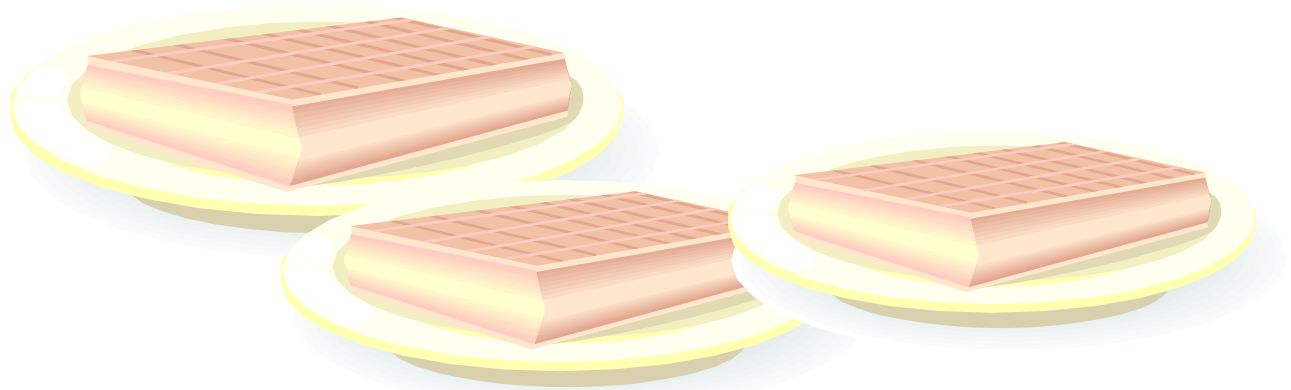
- Read and Examine each Chapter In Depth
- Select Key Concepts/Stories
- Break Down Into Smaller Pieces
- Find Clip-Art to Match Information
- Find Clip-Art to Help Get People's Attention
- Create Activities/Guide Discussion

# In the Beginning...



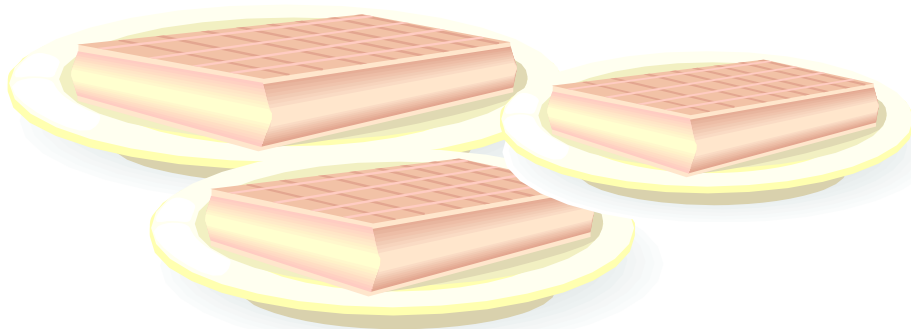
- Lots of Clip Art illustrating examples or adaptations of examples (to match available Clip Art) from “The Explosive Child”
- Include opportunities for everyone to share information, their struggles, and ask questions
- Trying to keep main points to 4 or less per screen shot

# Waffles anyone?



- Stevie is happy. There are waffles for breakfast!
- Stevie knows there are 6 waffles in the box.
- Stevie has a plan; 3 waffles today, 3 waffles tomorrow.
- Life is good!

# Waffles everyone?



- Stevie has 2 sisters and a brother.
- Susie, Sherry, and Stu want waffles, too.

# Stevie starts to scream. “No one else can have those waffles!!”



- Mom says, “Of course they can have waffles. They’re not just for you.”
- Stevie starts moving; he is slamming cupboard doors – he is like a tornado
- Stevie is still screaming – “I planned on having them tomorrow! No one else can have them!”

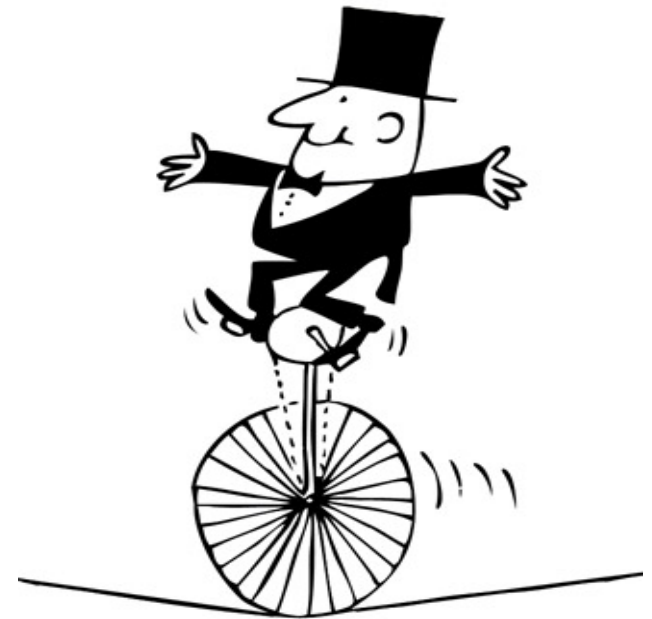
# Mom starts yelling, too.

- Mom yells, “If you won’t share – no one gets them!” and she throws the waffles away.
- Stevie storms off, cursing and hitting walls along the way.
- Susie, Sherry, and Stu are scared and hiding.
- They are confused about what to do.

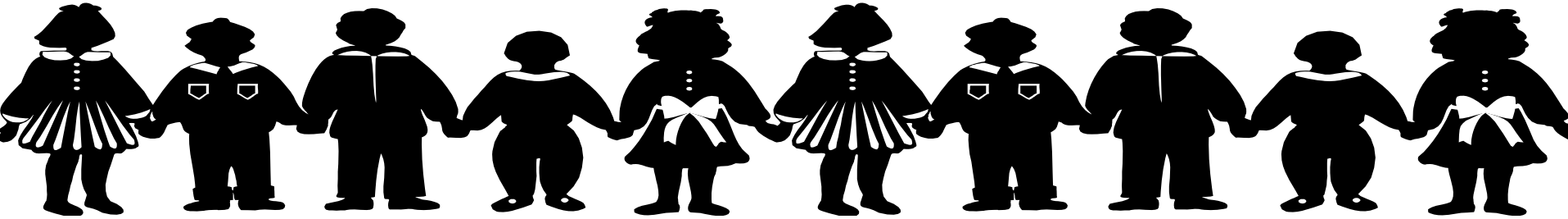


# Does this sound familiar?

- Does it feel like you're on a tightrope at home?
- Or walking on eggshells?
- The “waffle incident” is based on a true story.
- This was a “mild” incident.
- Now is a time to share.
- For those willing, please share one incident you have experienced similar to this one.

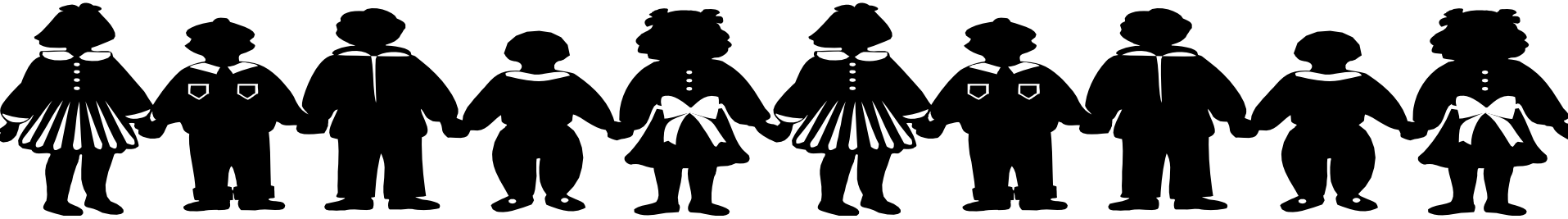


# Our Kids



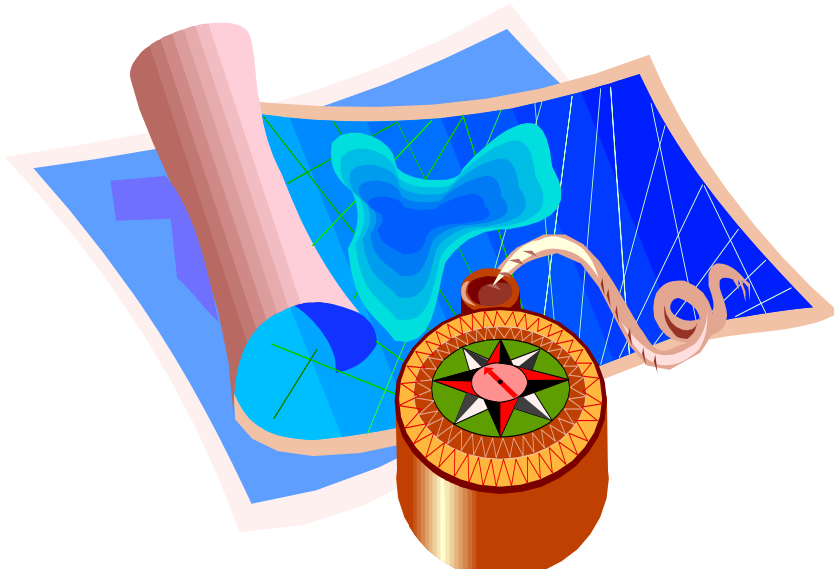
- Low frustration tolerance and threshold (gets angry quickly and overreacts frequently)
- Limited flexibility and adaptability (“changing gears” is hard, does not handle change in routine well)
- Emotional management difficulties (does not think before acting out, does not seem to learn from past consequences)

# Our Kids



- Perceive things in concrete absolutes (most things are “always” or “never”, aka “black and white”. It’s very hard for them to see middle ground, compromise, or the “gray”)
- Persistent inflexibility (cannot think logically or understand consequences when frustrated)
- Intermittent explosiveness (“meltdown” or “explode” with few warning signs, often over something small)

# Executive Skills



Planning



Shifting

# Shifting Gears



## Recess to Reading

Our kids have a hard time going from “It’s OK to play, make noise, and run” then switching gears to “Time to focus, be quiet, and sit still.”



Anyone care to share an example you’ve experienced?

# Poor sense of time and order

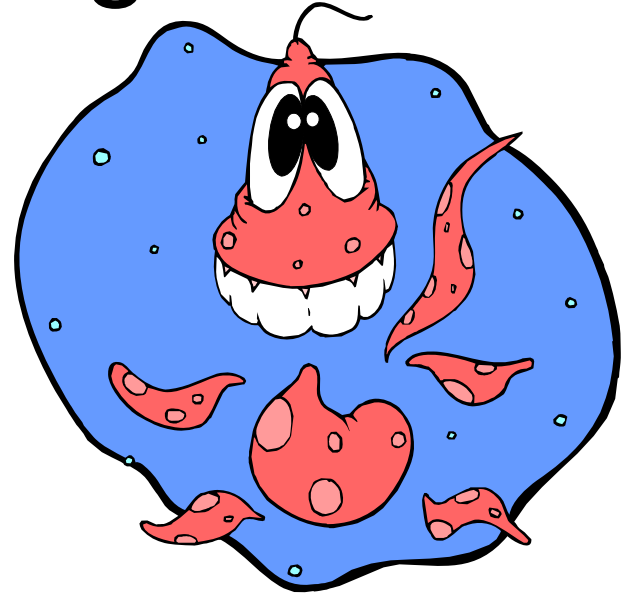
Getting ready for school:

- Breakfast
- Draw a Picture?
- Shower
- Brush Teeth
- Get Dressed
- Watch TV??
- Load Up Backpack
- Build a Lego Tower???
- Walk to the Busstop



# Disorganized Thinking

- If thoughts are disorganized, kids may not see a problem, let alone solutions
- Reflexive Negativity (says no, when first asked)



**NO!**

( I need a minute )

# Difficulty Thinking Ahead

## Impulsivity



Leaping off the roof like superman, can lead to a bad fall

Our kids have a hard time thinking about “What might happen if I do this?”



# As time goes by...

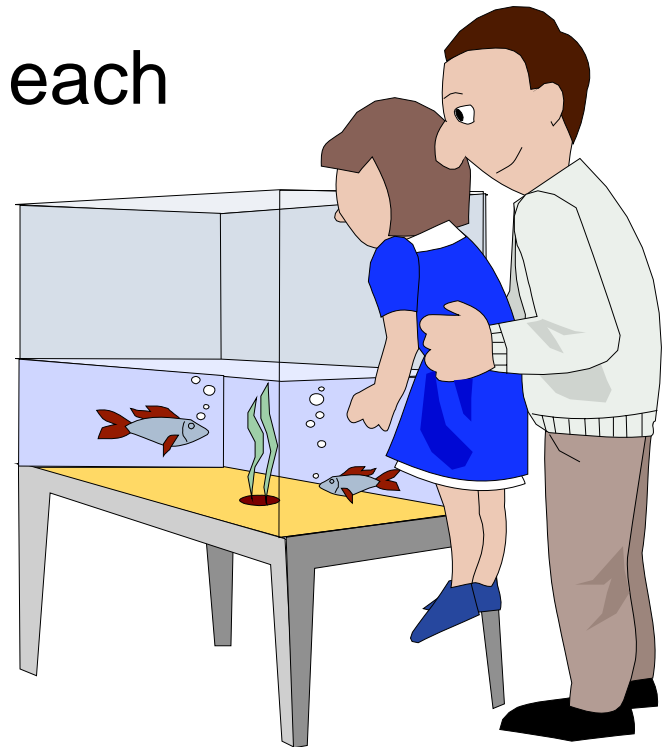


- Use the CPS-trained therapist to help illustrate CPS principles
- Continue to encourage class discussion
- “Hands On” Basket Sorting

# Helen – What's for dinner?

Tuesday

Helen and her Dad are enjoying each others company. While they are talking, Helen says she'd like some of her Dad's special chili for supper tomorrow. Her Dad reminds her he has to work and isn't sure if he'll be able to get it made, but he'll try.



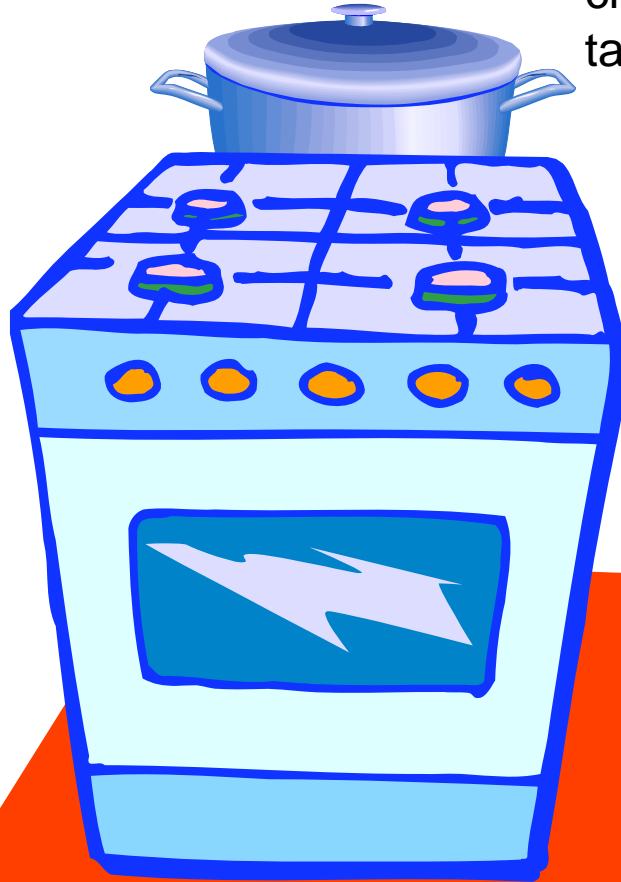


Dad's at work, but thinking of chili

# Wednesday



Dad's been watching the clock – and is able to take the afternoon off



Dad goes to the store, slaving in the kitchen

spends the afternoon making his special chili!

# Helen gets home...



Daddy, I want to help you make clam chowder for supper!

# And Dad says...



I was able to make my special chili – just like you wanted! We're having that for supper. We can do clam chowder tomorrow or this weekend.

Oh, Gross! Chili will gag me!!  
I don't want chili! I hate chili!  
I want clam chowder!!



# Dad Insists

Don't be silly. You love my chili. Yesterday you asked me to make it. I did, and now you're going to eat it.

And then...



# With the Therapist:



- Why was it important that Helen eat chili and not clam chowder?
- Do you think enduring this meltdown, that lasted for 2 hours and ruined everyone's evening, will make it less likely Helen will explode or meltdown again?
- Time for Helen (and her parents) to learn some new skills!

# 3 Options

- When children/youth are having problems, or not meeting expectations, you have 3 options
- Previous editions of this book referred to these options as “baskets”
- The third edition refers to them as “plans”
- We will start with baskets and shift to plans



# Baskets A, B, C



- A – Adults enforce their will and/or expectations
- B – Both work together to find a solution
- C – Child is allowed to choose the behavior

# Basket A – Adults

- Adults impose their will or solution
- “No,” “You must”, “You can’t”, “I will not discuss this”, “This is non-negotiable”, “Get your rear in gear”, “I insist”, “You have no choice,” are all phrases signaling you are in Basket A



# Basket B - Both



- Adult and child/youth work together to find solutions.
- This is collaborative problem solving (CPS)
- We will be spending more time on this approach shortly

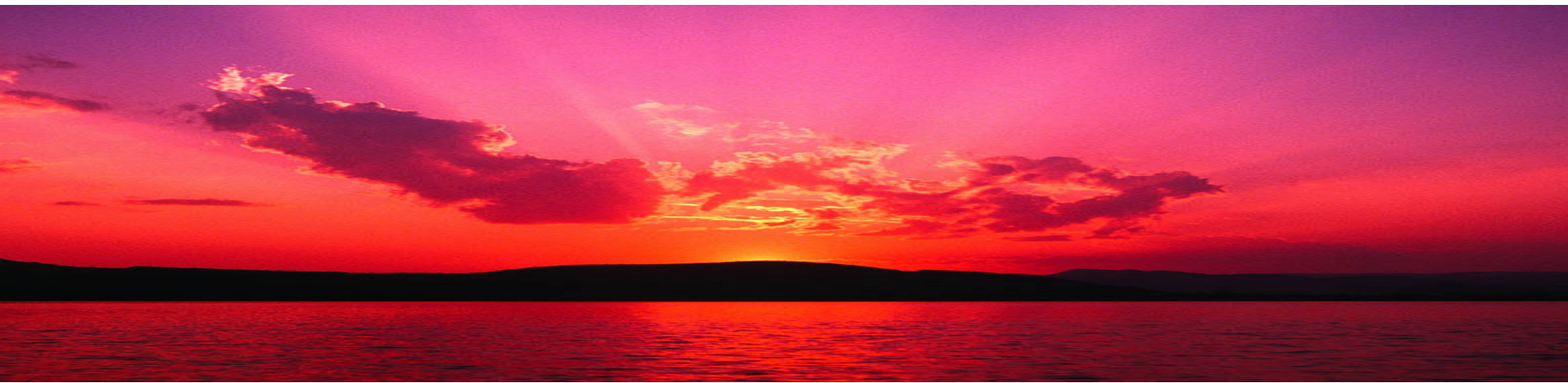
# Basket C - Child

- Child chooses the behavior.
- **You are still in control.** You have chosen to allow the child to behave this way, at least for now.
- You may have realized your expectation/solution was unrealistic for this child
- You may have more serious concerns that need to be taken care of first



# Towards the end...

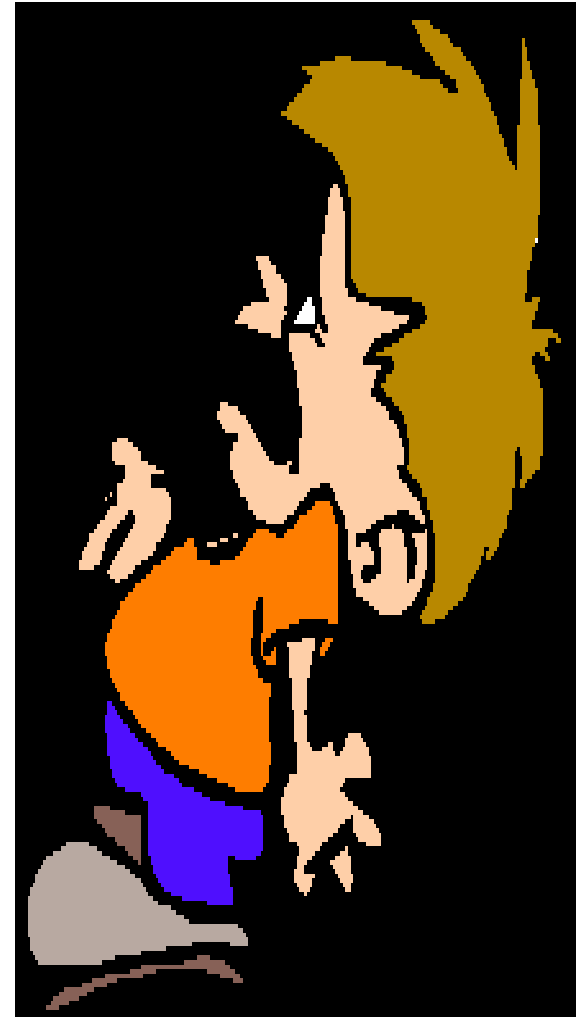
- Almost exclusively drawing from “real examples” shared by people in the group
- Having the group find answers, rather than getting them all from the book
- Looking at CPS in relation to systems issues



# STONE OF VOICE

- “But I want it NOW!!!”
- “You can’t make me!”
  - “GIMME!!”
- “What’s your problem?”

How does this change  
your reaction?



# Common “Explanations” About Explosive Kids

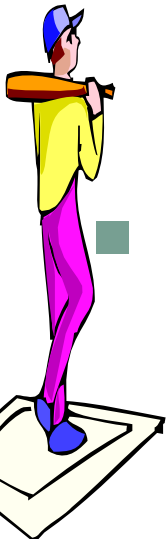
- He won't cooperate



- She's manipulative



- He just needs to “step up to the plate”



- Cooperate:” to come together, to collaborate” Have you ever given him a real chance
- Good manipulation requires forethought, planning, impulse control, good organization – do our kids have these skills??
- Can you “step up” when you don't have skills to hit the ball?



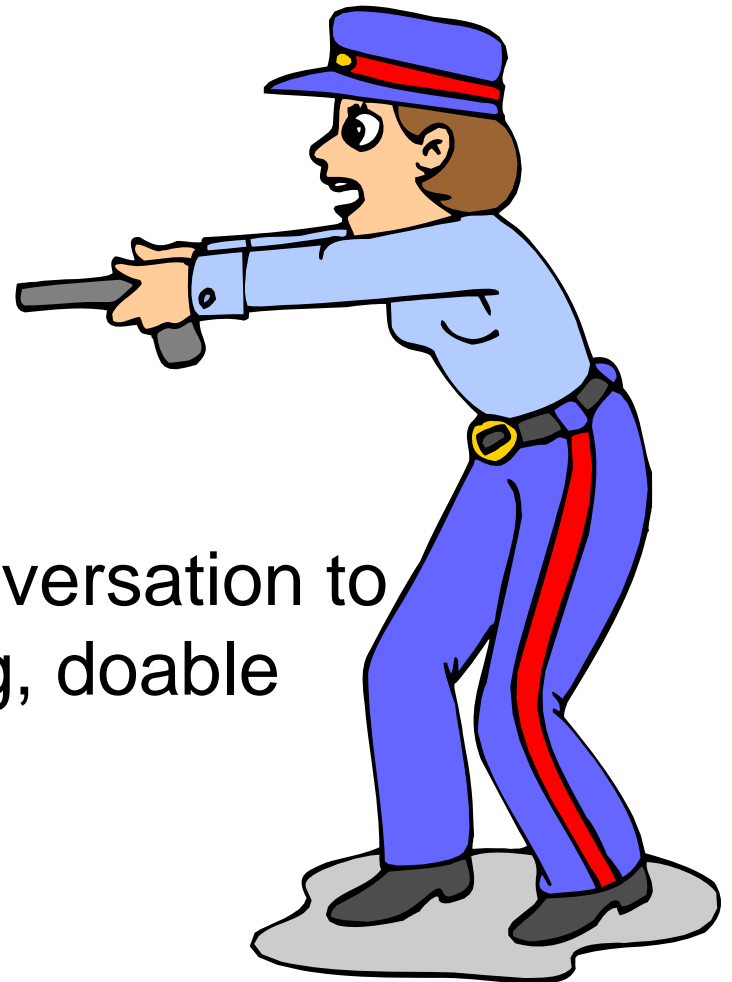
# What about older kids?



- Age Does Not Matter
- This is a developmental disability.
- Where your child is at with flexibility and frustration tolerance is what is important
- Your child could be 4, 14, 40
- What words and phrases you use will be different based on age, but not the steps

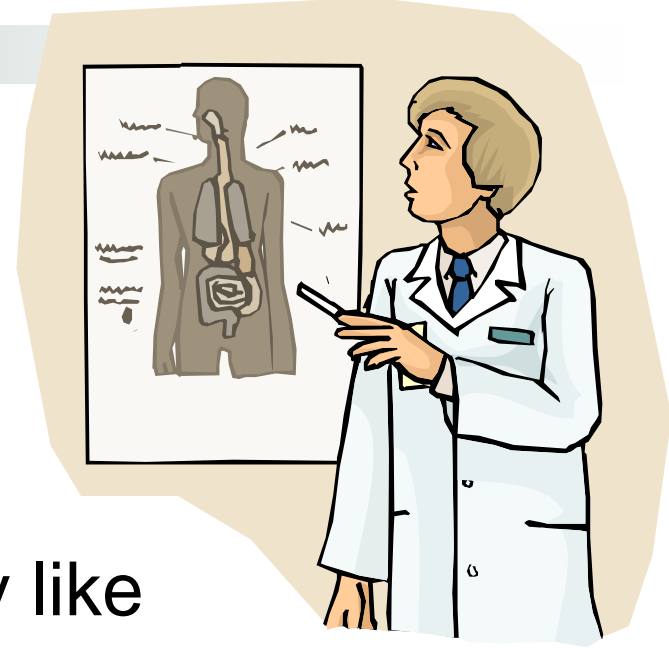
# When Empathy Is Hard

- Lying
- Stealing
- Vandalism
- Drug/Alcohol Use
- Sex
  - Will need more than 1 conversation to get to a mutually satisfying, doable solution



# Suggestions

- I've noticed that it's been hard for you to tell me the truth
- I don't want to punish you. I'd really like to understand why you're lying (drinking, stealing, etc)
- Can we talk about something?
- I get worried you'll become a parent before you're ready



# Sibling Rivalry



- Becomes **MAGNIFIED**
- Typical sibling teasing or antagonism becomes fuel for meltdowns
- Remind yourself, and your children **FAIR DOES NOT MEAN EQUAL**

# Plan B

- For Plan B, 2 or more concerns are on the table
- More than 2 people can be involved in Plan B
- All family members can put their concerns on the table, to find family solutions



# Communication Patterns

- Several communication styles can trigger meltdowns.
- Often this is the root when a specific person seems to be a trigger for explosions





# Perfectionism

- Parent does not acknowledge progress
- Parents focus on where they want the child to be, rather than how far the child has come
- Often relates to anxiety the parent has
- Child does not acknowledge progress
- Child focuses on his problems, rather than his successes

# Other Troublesome Styles



- Sarcasm: lost on black and white thinkers
- Put-Downs: “What’s the matter with you?”
- Catastrophizing: Extreme negative view
- Interrupting: Give your child time



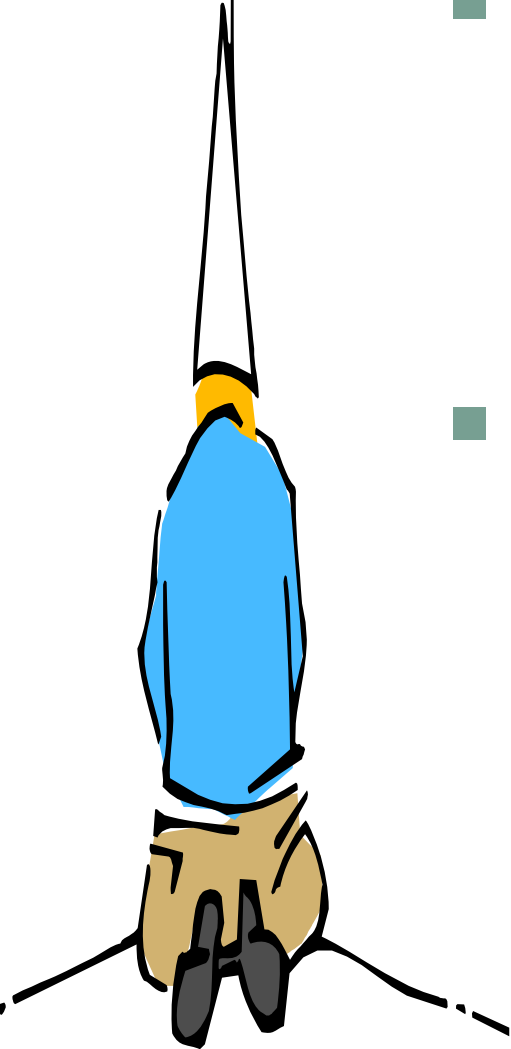
# Stuck in the System

- Overall, our society IS NOT well prepared to help these children
- Many school staff do not have the training or expertise needed
- Most daycare and after school programs do not accept/keep explosive children



# More Society Issues

- Many day treatment and residential programs rely heavily on reward/punishment models
- Most Police and Courts are not equipped to provide the support families need; one big scary punishment is held over kids' heads





# Other System Issues

- Most social service agencies are understaffed, and cannot spend the time needed for each individual
- Many communities are still blinded by stigma and do not offer supports or understanding
  - Managed health care and insurance issues impact our access to services
  - There is a national shortage of trained child/adolescent mental health professionals

# What's Next?

- We have completed one weekly and one monthly “Book Club”
- More people are now willing to present/guide in both formats
- Other books?

