



From Fixing to Connecting:

*Two Powerful Tips for Working With
Children With Special Needs*



How Can We Help Children Grow Beyond Their Present Limitations?

When we learn that something is wrong, whatever it might be, the natural thing to do is to focus on the limitation, on what the child can't do, or on what s/he is doing wrong, and then we try to conquer, stop, or otherwise overcome it. We want to solve the problem, and fix the child so s/he will sit up, talk, read, write, relate to others, etc.

The desire to *fix* what is broken or malfunctioning is tremendously important and useful. There are times when fixing is exactly the right approach; for example, when doctors need to surgically repair a hole in the heart or when an antibiotic is used to combat an infection. When they're necessary and when appropriate treatment is available, those fixes need to be carried out.

At the same time, it is important to understand that fixing is simply one way of approaching problems. It has great limitations and can at times even be counterproductive.

Children Are Works In Progress With Remarkable Potential

Children are living, feeling, and experiencing beings; works in progress—growing and evolving; in the process of figuring out and continuously forming the abilities to move, think, understand themselves, and relate to the world around them.

At the center of all this unfolding potential of your child is that most remarkable of all organs, the brain. To make full use of the brain's remarkable potential, we need to make a shift in our thinking, away from the fixing paradigm. We need to know how to focus our attention on what we can do to awaken and strengthen the capacities of the child's brain to do its job well.

Making the Transition From Fixing to Connecting

To be truly helpful to the child with special needs, we need to back off from trying to make the child do what s/he can't do. We need to more fully recognize the fundamental role the child's brain plays in learning and refining new skills. The brain has the ability to figure itself out and, amazingly, to create successful solutions to problems.

No matter how much we may want to help, and no matter what our expertise, we are 100% dependent on the child's brain to make the necessary changes.

Get Your Child's Brain Working Brilliantly

The *Nine Essentials* are tools for you to feel, see, notice, and create; more important, they will increase your own capacity to connect with and work with your child, whatever his or her special needs may be.

The purpose of connecting with your child through the *Nine Essentials* is about providing your child with the greatest opportunity to develop real skills and a strong sense of self, to feel good about him/herself and to have the ability to continue to learn and grow, with a genuine sense of accomplishment and pride.

The Nine Essentials will get your child's brain working brilliantly.

NOTE: Excerpts taken from Kids Beyond Limits (pgs. 17-25).

It can be tempting to try to tackle a child's limitations by trying to "fix" them, be that by "stretching" tight muscles, by repeated behavioral conditioning, or by trying to get a child to sit, stand, walk, or talk when he can't do it.

However, the greatest potential for transformation is not in trying to make children do what they can't, but in finding ways to help each child's brain differentiate and spontaneously discover how to go beyond his or her limitations.

TRY THESE TWO TIPS WITH YOUR CHILD

TIP #1: The first step is to stop trying to “fix” the child, and stop trying to have the child do what he or she cannot do.

Take a few days and simply observe the moments and times when you are in the “fixing” mode with your child, be it around academic learning, behavioral issues, or anything else. Don’t rush to try and change what you normally do.

Give yourself some time to become aware of your own feelings and actions that are associated with trying to help your child.

TIP #2: Look to *connect* with your child instead of trying to *fix* the child. Try using the *Movement with Attention Essential*.

When your child moves—any movement will do—look to gently bring her attention to herself and to what she feels as she moves. For example, you can touch her arm as she swings it, perhaps swing with it, and perhaps say “swinging, swinging...” while the movement is taking place. You can look to slow the movement down a bit, then go a bit faster; you can touch her arm and then stop touching it while it moves.

How Did These Tips Work for You?

What did you notice about your child? What did you notice about yourself? We’d love to hear your feedback—please join our conversation on Facebook at:

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