

THE 4-C'S METHOD WHEN KIDS ACT OUT



CURIOUS OBSERVATION

A curious mindset is the opposite of a judgmental one ([click her for a deeper dive on this topic.](#)) Notice who your children are without judgment and triggers. Are they physical, loud, soft, aloof, do they shut down? Treat these characteristics as observations not diagnoses. Don't make this personal. Make it factual.



CONSCIOUS REFLECTION

This is when you get to ZOOM out. What happened earlier? Try to feel, hear and see every detail that happened before your child acted out as if you were them. Open your senses to that of your child. Remember to be able to do this consciously, you must tap into your Being, which allows you to see yourself in your child (without separation or sense of superiority).

3

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Steve Jobs is famously quoted for saying you can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. Look for patterns and associations to better understand the types of situations that trigger your child's 'acting out' behavior. This will take some time but anything great is worth waiting for.

4

CREATE INTROSPECTION

The best part about creative problem solving is what you get to create out of it. You get to help them see themselves for who they are through the gift of introspection. This may be one of the greatest gifts you can give them because this is how they get to make sense of themselves and their lives. Expand their emotional vocabulary with every opportunity possible. Give them healthy tools or alternatives to express their emotions and natural behavior.



Example of a child who is acting out when angry:

1. Curious Observation

My child gets loud and physical when angry. She needs to kick and punch and scream. She cannot hear anything I am saying in the middle of her anger. This is her natural response. I am aware of my own discomfort when she acts out. But this has nothing to do with her.

2. Conscious Reflection

Let me replay the scene with curiosity and openness. What was her environment like? She fell asleep in the car and I woke her up to go inside. I was holding her baby brother in my arms when she started to lose control of her emotions. How would I see this situation in her shoes? I wonder if it made her angry that I was holding him and I couldn't hold her? Hmm!?



Example of a child who is acting out when angry (continued):

3. Connecting the Dots

She definitely is feeling sensitive to having to share attention with the baby. She also has a lot of rage that comes naturally to her.

4. Create Introspection

Talk to the child with the intention to give them the tools and language to communicate their needs and understand their behavior: You were feeling exhausted. Did you wish that I could hold you and bring you inside the house? Next time when you feel like this, please let me know you are feeling exhausted and you want me to hold you. I would be happy to do so. Also, when you get angry like this, you may scream and kick and punch a pillow. But you may not hit me or kick the car under any circumstances.



Example of a child who is acting out by being distracted:

1. Curious Observation

My child is not focused on his homework. He keeps standing up from his chair and walking back and forth around the house doing random things. I am aware of my impatience with this. It has nothing to do with him. It is not personal. This is just a moment.

2. Conscious Reflection

Let me replay the day with openness. What has the environment been like for him? He was just playing video games and watching tv right before. He also had quite a lot of sugar just a moment ago... How much media and sugar is he consuming on a daily basis? How does he work out his energy usually? What are the types of activities that he is involved in that nurture his 'focus' muscles?



Example of a child who is acting out by being distracted (continued):

3. Connecting the Dots

I am noticing a pattern in that he gets stimulated and antsy after too much screen time. He may need more physical activity in his days to help ground him.

4. Create Introspection

Talk to the child with the intention to give them the tools and language to communicate their needs and understand their behavior: Your body wants to move and you are having trouble focusing. Let's go for a quick walk outside and see if that helps. And maybe we can do your homework standing up tonight. If you feel like your body is getting antsy, let me know and I can help you find some tools to re-focus.