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## Reach Out and Connect: Managing Challenging Behaviors Pt. 4

After three packed workshops on managing challenging behaviors at home, we are concluding the series with a Q&A! Our special guest is **Kay Rocha, a behavioral assistant in Florida for over 25 years**, and she'll be answering 5 frequently asked questions. Before diving in, remember that you have the opportunity to be your child's teacher and role model!

### 1. How should parents respond to children who do not want to go to bed?

**Kay** – There are two key components to keep in mind here:

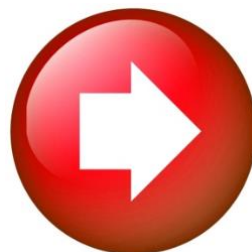
- a. Guide, but engage your child
  - Bedtime is no fun when it feels like a chore! So try to include your child in the process – talk through what must get done (putting on pajamas, brushing teeth, etc.), but let them choose the order, and if you choose to end by reading a book together (always good), let them choose the book as well!
- b. Consistency
  - No matter the routine chosen or its order, sticking with it is critical, and can actually make it something that you and your child bond over!



### 2. How should parents respond to children who whine when unhappy?

**Kay** – Above all else, it is critical to ensure that you don't reward whining, as this only increases the probability that your child will whine again in the future because they know it can be successful. Instead, try the following:

- a. Ignore
  - Show your child that whining won't achieve anything
- b. Teach your child more appropriate ways to deal with uncomfortable emotions, and then redirect the difficult behavior/whining into a positive behavior
  - For example – "I'm so sorry that we can't get any toys today, but if we behave well today in the store, we can look for toys next week!"



### 3. How can parents cultivate their child's mental health?

**Kay** – Great question! You can promote good mental health by the things you say and do, and through the environment you create at home:

- a. Show appreciation of your child's success, but more importantly, their efforts
- b. Listen & respect their feelings
  - Let them know that it is okay to feel sad, angry, etc., and open a line of communication about these feelings
- c. Create a safe, positive home environment
  - Provide space for physical activity and family bonding, and monitor screen use
  - Be a role model by taking care of your own mental health and expressing your feelings!

### 4. How can parents positively reinforce their children?

**Kay** – Positive reinforcement can be tangible or intangible:

- a. Tangible
  - Take child to the playground, reward system
- b. Intangible
  - Offer praise, give a high five/hug/thumbs up

Also – positive reinforcement is even more effective than negative reinforcement!



### 5. How can parents stay calm when dealing with challenging behavior?



**Kay** – One of the most important pieces of remaining calm is remembering that your mood affects your child's mood. When you feel yourself getting upset, try to:

- a. Ask yourself “who, what, when, where, why, and how” about the behavior your child is displaying
  - The “why” is most important – trying to understand your child will improve your response
- b. Actively choose to consider how your response affects your child's emotional well-being

### 3 General Tips

1. You won't always get it right as a parent, and that's okay!
2. Boundaries will promote emotional wellbeing and growth for your child.
3. Watching your child discover themselves and being aware of their thinking is not only a joy but can actually help promote positive behaviors!

For any questions about the content or our virtual programming, please email Kristen Rocha Aldrich at [krochaaldrich@reachoutandreadnyc.org](mailto:krochaaldrich@reachoutandreadnyc.org).