

**But That’s How It’s Always Been Done: Breaking Generational Practices Around Positive Guidance and Discipline**

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**Metatheories of Child Rearing**

1. Natural Unfolding/Noble Savage - basically good; need protection from society
2. Tabula Rasa/Blank Slate/Empty Vessel - Comes into the world without predisposed inclinations
3. The Tempted (Devil on the Left Shoulder; Angel on the Right) - adult must keep child from falling victim to temptation
4. Unsocialized Savage - impulses must be strongly inhibited and controlled from birth
5. The Early Unformed - child is not capable of conscious activity until out of infancy period
6. The Innocent - seen as innocent and not at fault until age of reasoning (5-7 years of age)
7. The Competent/Vulnerable Child - child is both vulnerable and competent at the same time and has own learning agenda

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Why is this happening?	How can I tell?	What should I do?
<p>Possible Cause:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maturation – The behavior is due to the child’s developmental stage</li> <li>2. The behavior is the child’s practicing, a necessary aspect of mastery and human development</li> </ol>	<p>Clues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I have read about it in books</li> <li>2. I have seen children at the same stage behave this way</li> <li>3. I remember doing it myself as a child</li> </ol> <p>Always reflect on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of child’s expectations</li> <li>• Sense of relationship with the child</li> <li>• Child’s sense of self</li> </ul>	<p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Relax – all children do it. It will end/evolve</li> <li>2. Tolerate – it is developmentally significant/useful</li> <li>3. Channel – Allow the child a safe, tolerable way to practice</li> <li>4. Stop – stop behavior when it is disruptive or dangerous, but remember it will return</li> </ol>
<p><b>The First Possible Cause: The Developmental Stage</b></p>		

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Why is this happening?	How can I tell?	What should I do?
<p>Possible Cause:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not all the children of a certain age act in exactly the same way</li> <li>Temperamental or constitutional qualities account for differences in behavior</li> <li>All children experience the world according to their unique physiology</li> </ol>	<p>Clues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not due solely to developmental stage</li> <li>Information about child's unique qualities from birth</li> <li>Have read about - research on                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temperament</li> <li>Sensory motor capacities</li> <li>Effects of intrauterine drug exposure</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observe and identify child's unique style</li> <li>Adapt expectations and interactions</li> <li>Offer options that allow for and appreciate children's unique expressions and responses to the world</li> <li>Continue asking parents for attributions and possible explanations</li> </ol>
<p><b>The Second Possible Cause: Individual Differences</b></p>		

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Why is this happening?	How can I tell?	What should I do?
<p>Possible Cause:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The specific environment: child care setting</li> <li>The general environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The home setting – what is happening at home?                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family situation</li> <li>Lifestyle</li> <li>Culture</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>Clues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behavior is not due to developmental stage or individual difference</li> <li>In child care setting, several children exhibiting the same behavior</li> <li>Home/child care have different expectations</li> <li>Sudden change in behavior at home</li> </ol>	<p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In child care setting, do something to ensure protection/attention/stimulation/order/calm</li> <li>Get more information from parents/professionals</li> <li>Don't focus on the individual child (who is not in control of conflict)</li> <li>Change or adapt expectations to reduce conflict</li> </ol>
<p><b>The Third Possible Cause: The Environment</b></p>		

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Why is this happening?	How can I tell?	What should I do?
<p>Possible Cause:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The child doesn't know but is ready to learn – the behavior is an approach to a situation or task he is exploring or attempting to master. Without an adult instruction/support, the child relies on his own resources – what he knows so far</li> </ol>	<p>Clues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behavior is not due to developmental stage or individual difference, or environment</li> <li>The child is young</li> <li>The child is in a new or unfamiliar situation</li> <li>The child is facing a new task or problem</li> </ol>	<p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide protection for the child to explore</li> <li>Teach – demonstrate</li> <li>Talk – explain over and over</li> <li>Give reasons</li> <li>Encourage small successes</li> <li>Always offer help</li> </ol>
<p><b>The Fourth Possible Cause: The Child Does Not Know But Is Ready to Learn</b></p>		

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Why is this happening?	How can I tell?	What should I do?
<p>Possible Cause:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The child has missed something developmentally and/or emotionally important</li> <li>The need has intensified rather than diminished</li> <li>Child is searching for ways to meet the need. The behavior is the child's attempt to meet the need without being able to rely on adult assistance</li> </ol> <p><b>The Fifth Possible Cause: Unmet Emotional Need</b></p>	<p>Clues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The behavior is developmentally inappropriate. The child is not "acting his age"</li> <li>The behavior has a driven quality. The child has to do it</li> <li>The behavior is everywhere and always</li> <li>The behavior, even when channeled or stopped, keeps popping up</li> <li>The usual ways of handling and helping most children with this behavior do not seem to help this child</li> </ol>	<p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do something – this behavior will not pass, it will get worse</li> <li>Respond to the child's need actively. Through deeds – not words. Through giving – not withholding. Through support – not punishment.</li> <li>Sometimes you stop the behavior when the child is hurting self or others. "No" is not a period – it is a pause</li> <li>Meet the needs as much as possible with quiet firmness and patience</li> <li>Remember the child can't stop/control behavior</li> <li>Get additional support for yourself, child and family</li> </ol>

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<p><b>Healthy early brain development requires:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Attachment</li> <li>• Responsive care</li> <li>• Experiences</li> <li>• Modeling</li> <li>• Guidance</li> <li>• Socialization</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Resources and References</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Johnston, K., &amp; Thompson, L. (n.d.) Toward a better understanding of children's behavior [Handout from Module I, Understanding children's behavior: Supporting the individual needs of infants and toddlers training session]. Unpublished document. Sausalito, CA: The Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers.</li> <li>• Lally, J. R. (2006). Metatheories of childrearing. In J. R. Lally, P. L. Mangione, &amp; D. Greenwald (Eds.), Concepts for care (pp. 7-13). San Francisco, CA: WestEd.</li> <li>• Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <a href="http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary">http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary</a>. Accessed 3 Oct. 2022.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– "Punishment"</li> <li>– "Discipline"</li> <li>– "Socialization"</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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