

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

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

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

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

Why is this happening?	How can I tell?	What should I do?
<p>Possible Cause:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>Clues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior is not due to developmental stage or individual difference, or environment The child is young The child is in a new or unfamiliar situation The child is facing a new task or problem 	<p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide protection for the child to explore Teach – demonstrate Talk – explain over and over Give reasons Encourage small successes Always offer help
<p>The Fourth Possible Cause: The Child Does Not Know But Is Ready to Learn</p>		

Why is this happening?	How can I tell?	What should I do?
<p>Possible Cause:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The child has missed something developmentally and/or emotionally important The need has intensified rather than diminished 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 <p>The Fifth Possible Cause: Unmet Emotional Need</p>	<p>Clues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The behavior is developmentally inappropriate. The child is not "acting his age" The behavior has a driven quality. The child has to do it The behavior is everywhere and always The behavior, even when channeled or stopped, keeps popping up The usual ways of handling and helping most children with this behavior do not seem to help this child 	<p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Do something – this behavior will not pass, it will get worse Respond to the child's need actively. Through deeds – not words. Through giving – not withholding. Through support – not punishment. Sometimes you stop the behavior when the child is hurting self or others. "No" is not a period – it is a pause Meet the needs as much as possible with quiet firmness and patience Remember the child can't stop/control behavior Get additional support for yourself, child and family

<p>Healthy early brain development requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security • Attachment • Responsive care • Experiences • Modeling • Guidance • Socialization

<p>Resources and References</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnston, K., & 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. • Lally, J. R. (2006). Metatheories of childrearing. In J. R. Lally, P. L. Mangione, & D. Greenwald (Eds.), Concepts for care (pp. 7-13). San Francisco, CA: WestEd. • Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary. Accessed 3 Oct. 2022. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – "Punishment" – "Discipline" – "Socialization"
