

Speaker 1:

Hello, everyone. It's October. Can you believe it? It's getting really cold here in New York City. It's actually been raining for the past... I don't know how many weekends. So if you're living here, you are dealing with all of that along with me. October brings about an opportunity for us in education to talk about learning differences. This is a topic that is near and dear to my heart. So I wanted to talk with you about a couple of key invitations as well as a framework that I'm going to invite you to use if you have a child with any kind of learning difference, whether they have ADHD or they have dyslexia, and I want you to just try it on, see how it feels. So let's get into it.

So first of all, I'm going to invite you as a parent to come and join our parent groups, which are starting this month. We are doing intake calls for them, and we'll place you in a group where you have some, I guess, attributes to other parents and what you're dealing with. Meredith Bluestine, our parent educator, and I are running these groups, and we're helping families to walk through the framework that I will talk about in a moment. So if you're interested, please pm me, email me, text me, whatever you'd like to set up your intake call so we could see if this is a fit for you. The key here is to work through this framework.

Number one, let's understand your child. Let's all together work on building that understanding. Unfortunately, this isn't a one-and-done process. The understanding of another human being is an ongoing process that often requires a guide of some kind.

In my years of parenting with my partner, I have engaged in a whole lot of learning by a whole lot of people who have been a little bit further along than I have in some things. So maybe they know a little more about psychology. Maybe they know a little bit more about ADHD, dyslexia schools, all the things. Everything I've learned, everything I've done, I've always really done a lot of work to learn about it.

So the idea is, you need to build an understanding of your child. This comes with spending time with your child. It comes with asking questions. It comes from assessment, testing your child in different ways. It comes from researching what's out there and what's going on with your child, might be already known in the field of education. You, as a parent, don't have to be the educational expert. You don't have to be a psychologist. You don't have to be an educator who could teach a child with dyslexia. But you do need to be resourceful and learn. So the first thing is you got to understand your kid.

Then you're going to have to get on the same page with everybody who's in that child's life. There's lots of stakeholders, maybe. Maybe you have a teacher involved, maybe you have a coach involved, maybe you have some specialists. You need to get onto the same page with what you're working toward. The best way to procrastinate anything, the best way to avoid anything, the best way to just not deal with anything is to not have a common vision or goal of what you're working towards. So we label things with kids, like ADHD or dyslexia, to give a name to something going on with our kids. That's what it is. Then we can all row the boat in the same direction to help the child to do what their brain doesn't do. But everybody has to be on the same page.

Parents, you guys are the leaders of the boat. You're the captain of the ship, and you have to be clear on what you're doing. Sometimes, there's a lot of things to be doing as a parent. You got to be feeding them. You got to be putting them to bed. You have to be finding the clothes. You have to be doing your own job. You have to find time to shower. Let's just put it that way. There's a lot to do. What we really want to do is make sure that you have routines, habits in place to help your child to go forward in the way they need to.

Often, as you understand your kid, let's say they have ADHD for example, the way you parent your child is actually informed by their ADHD. It's not absent of it.

So in these groups, what we're doing with you is we're building a dynamic way to understand your child, a dynamic way to work with your child in the way they need you to work with them based on their neurology, which is unfortunately hidden from you. It's in their brains. It's very hard to see. There's not a sign that they wear on their heads that says, "I have ADHD. I can't hold onto your 10-step direction that you just fired off to me and you're expecting me to follow. I cannot do that. So I know you're getting frustrated with me and you're yelling, but I actually can't deal with that either because that's a total sensory overload. So actually, I'm just going to shut down right now and then everyone's going to get upset, but I don't care because I can't do it anyway."

So your child might be in that situation, your family might be in that position, and you don't need to be there because we can talk through what's going on with your child and give you ways to parent so that you're not feeling so overwhelmed and unsuccessful, especially.

So that's what this is all about. It's about understanding. It's about getting on the same page, and then it's about taking action. So great ideas are discussed, great ideas are shared. You might have an intention in your brain, "I want to work with my kid in the way they need me to work with them." But unless you actually put things into action, it's not going to go anywhere. So that's the third part of the framework, is just to take action on what you need to as a parent for your kid. Sometimes if your kid has multiple things going on, maybe there's a sensory issue, maybe there's dyslexia, maybe there's ADHD, there's a lot of things to work on, but you need to take action in order to repel those things forward.

Then the fourth part is reflection. So looking at what's going on and saying, "Is this working for us? Is this sustainable? Is this something I can keep consistent? Do I need to change this up? Do I need to change up what I'm doing in terms of support?" Et cetera. So all of this is what we do. I just want to leave you with a little something personal too, because that's, I think, helpful for you to know that this isn't just a professional work for me.

This is personal, and that I have children with different neurology that I've worked really hard to parent, and my daughter wanted to come on the podcast this month and just share with you all how she can talk about her disabilities and express how she's doing with them. Because that is something that we also do, which is we name them and we talk about what they are and what they aren't. Sometimes it's just important also to allow kids to come in with their own solutions to what they have in terms of the labels. So that's something that we definitely practice here at Evolved, but also in my own work as a parent.

So I'm going to close there, and I do hope that you will be in touch with us to participate in this work that we're doing. And please take some time this month to educate yourselves on learning differences. We're doing some really amazing work here at Evolved, not only with families one-to-one, I'm also speaking with the heads of schools and nurses this month about learning differences and ways that schools can create policies and procedures to help students with different neurology. We're working on integrated executive function coaching and professional development with different schools to help them to put in place supports for students because this is important to do for every school, and we all need to bring awareness so that we can include kids in the learning process, especially those that have learning differences. Their differences are simply that we can definitely still include them and make sure that they're learning well.

All right, have a great month, everybody. And if you haven't already picked up my book Disability: ABILITY, this is a great month to do that. You can get it on Amazon. And if you have any other questions about the topic, please feel free to be in touch with me during this month and always. Have a great rest of your day and month, and thanks for having a listen.

Speaker 1:

Hi, everyone. I am here with my daughter Alexis, who is celebrating Learning Differences Awareness Month with me. And as part of that, she wants to come on and tell you a little bit about her experience of having disabilities.

And, Alexis, how are you?

Alexis:

I'm good.

Speaker 1:

Thanks for being here.

So Alexis is 10. And, Alexis, what disabilities do you have?

Alexis:

I have ADHD and dyslexia, and when I was little I had selective mutism.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

So when you were little, it was hard for you to talk in school and you would talk fine at home, but then in school you were like, "Nope, I'm not talking," right? And so we got you some speech and actually you did speech all the way until last year. Remember that?

Alexis:

Mm-hmm.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

And then now, how do you feel about your disabilities actually right now?

Alexis:

I feel fine.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

And what kinds of things do we do as a family to help you with your disabilities?

Alexis:

Like, I take medicine for my ADHD, and I go to a special school that teaches me to learn how to read.

Speaker 1:

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Yeah, exactly. So you can take medicine for ADHD and then you can also go to special schools and programs to learn how to read if you have dyslexia, right? We practice that all the time in our house, don't we?

Yes. All right, great.

So thank you so much to everybody who's listening and happy Learning Disabilities Awareness Month. I hope you get to talk about disability-

Alexis:

Bye.

Speaker 1:

... with your family.