



# BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR

*A Parent's Guide to Understanding Child  
Development and Psychology Behind Behavior*

Child Psychology and Development Science Made Simple and Rooted  
in Scripture for Calmer Days & Deeper Connection

[www.TheKairosBridge.com](http://www.TheKairosBridge.com)

# 1 BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR: CHILD PSYCHOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT SIMPLIFIED

## BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION

If your days look anything like this...



...and you still end the day exhausted, frustrated, or second-guessing yourself.  
You're not alone, and you're not imagining how hard this feels.

## What if parenting could feel different?

We joke that kids don't come with an instruction manual...but you know what does? **Parenting!** The scientific literature and scripture are rich with truths about how parents can positively influence a child's natural development. You know what the first rule of child behavior is?  
***Behavior is communicating unmet needs!***

We just need to understand a little bit about the underlying psychology and development. It is tempting to label behavior as defiance or disrespect, but really, their brains are still under construction. When we jump to reaction too quickly, correct behavior without connecting to the underlying need, or simply manage the behavior in the moment, what we get is compliance, not growth.

### ! A note on compliant behavior

Compliance can reduce conflict in the short term, but long-term it may increase the risk of:

- anxiety and internalized stress
- people-pleasing and fear of disappointing others
- difficulty identifying or expressing emotions
- suppressed anger that surfaces later in life
- challenges with boundaries and self-advocacy

# 2 BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR: CHILD PSYCHOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT SIMPLIFIED

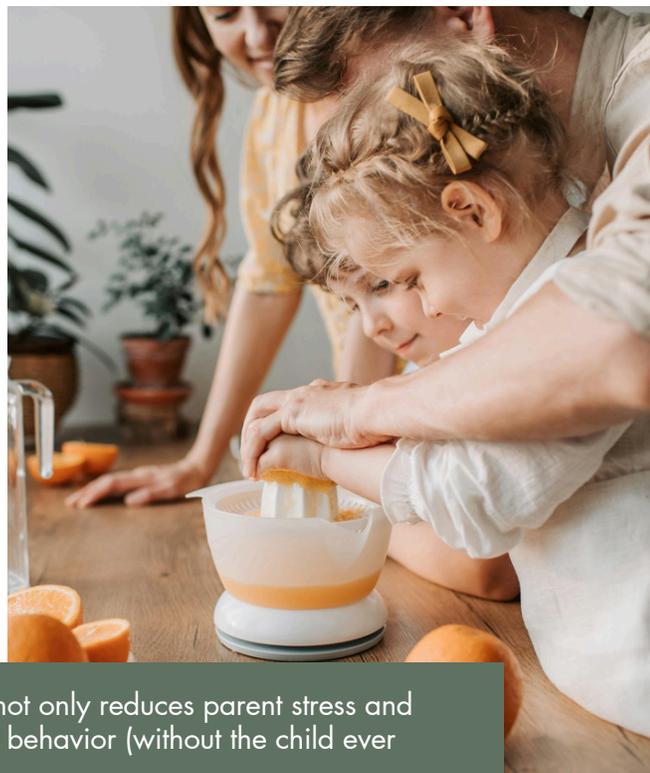
## BEHAVIOR IS JUST THE SYMPTOM

Behavior is driven by **psychological and developmental needs**. If we address the behavior without understanding what's going on underneath, we miss developmental growth opportunities.

But you don't need a degree in child psychology, just a simple framework that helps you...

- ✔ Understand why your child is reacting this way
- ✔ Respond with confidence instead of a knee-jerk reaction
- ✔ Reduce power struggles without giving up boundaries
- ✔ Build emotional and behavioral skills that last a lifetime

It doesn't happen overnight, but...



Science shows that just **6 weeks of parent coaching** not only reduces parent stress and increases parent confidence, but also improves child behavior (without the child ever entering a coaching session!)

**What the Next 45 Days Could Look Like** with the right understanding and support:

- ✔ Fewer emotional explosions and quicker recovery when they happen
- ✔ Children beginning to name feelings instead of acting them out
- ✔ Less arguing over daily routines
- ✔ Stronger cooperation rooted in trust
- ✔ Parents feeling calmer, clearer, and more confident



***This Guide Is Your Starting Point!***

You'll learn how to:

- see behavior through a developmental lens
- understand what your child's brain needs in emotional moments
- respond in ways that build regulation, responsibility, and resilience

This approach is grounded in **child development science**, and inspired by the way God parents us with patience, understanding, and restoration.

**Change doesn't start with doing more. It starts with seeing differently.**

# 3 BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR: CHILD PSYCHOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT SIMPLIFIED

## REAL LIFE SCENARIOS

**Behavior** is the last link in a much longer chain reaction to internal psychology and development:

- a feeling they can't name (*emotions*)
- a belief they don't yet understand (*thoughts*)
- a need they don't know how to ask for (*needs*)

Let's look for examples (below):



**What's happening underneath:**

- emotions that feel bigger than the body can hold
- an overwhelmed nervous system
- unmet needs for safety, control, or connection (e.g., HALTSS, SSFPF)

**Why it looks explosive:** Regulation skills are still developing



**What's happening underneath:**

- difficulty with executive function (e.g., task initiation, planning, working memory)
- need for clarity and step-wise instruction
- processing overload or overwhelm

**Why it looks like refusal:** The child's brain isn't skilled at organizing complex tasks



**What's happening underneath:**

- immature executive functioning & working memory overload
- competing emotional demands
- moral reasoning and decision making are under construction

**Why it looks careless:** The brain is still learning to plan and follow through.



**What's happening underneath:**

- fear of disappointing or getting in trouble
- desire to protect relationship or self-image
- moral reasoning still anchored to fear of consequences

**Why it looks deceptive:** Safety feels uncertain in the moment, so fear takes over



**What's happening underneath:**

- emotional fatigue or stress
- sensory or cognitive overload
- feeling powerless or rushed

**Why it looks dramatic:** Small requests land on an already overwhelmed, unregulated nervous system

Children don't misbehave because they want to make parenting hard. They behave in ways that make sense to their developing brain and nervous system.

# 4 BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR: CHILD PSYCHOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT SIMPLIFIED

## A SIMPLE WAY TO RESPOND DIFFERENTLY

Over the years, I've taught thousands of parents a simple, repeatable framework: **Notice It · Name It · Nurture It**. It is based on the latest evidence in child psychology and development, like Bowlby and Ainsworth's attachment theory, Bandura's socio-emotional learning theory, Porges's polyvagal theory, Erikson's stages of development, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, and more!



The framework is designed to help you:

- ✔ Slow down,
- ✔ Become less reactive and more attuned,
- ✔ Understand what is driving a child's behavior, and;
- ✔ Respond in ways that build long-term social, emotional, and cognitive health.

### Notice It · Name It · Nurture It™ Framework

#### Notice It

See what behavior is trying to say. Start with what you can see, and get curious about what's causing it.

##### Instead of thinking:

- "They're being dramatic."
- "They're trying to push my buttons."

##### Try:

- "They are struggling with something. What is it?"
- "This behavior is a pattern. I want to identify the trigger."

**This step gives you time to pause, reflect, and regulate. Regulated parents create safe space for regulation to follow.**

#### Name It

Put words to what's going on inside. Behavior is usually driven by: emotions, thoughts, beliefs, needs, desires, hopes, longings. You don't need to diagnose. You're simply getting curious.

##### Ask:

- "What feeling does this behavior signal?"
- "What thoughts or beliefs might be influencing them?"
- "What could they be needing right now?"

Then, invite them to talk about it. Naming brings clarity. Clarity brings compassion. Compassion changes everything about a relationship. We must parent the heart, not just the behavior. That's where growth happens — when we help our kids see what's underneath, and then **learn healthy ways to express it**.

#### Nurture It

Respond to the need, not just the behavior. Nurturing doesn't mean removing limits. It means meeting the need while holding the boundary.

**Nurturing** is synonymous with **support**. What do they need in this moment? To be:

- **Heard** – just listen actively and with empathy
- **Hugged** – provide comfort and encouragement
- **Helped** – offer perspective and collaborative problem-solving

Sometimes nurturing looks like closeness, reassurance, fewer words, a choice rather than a command, and a calm presence before correction.



# THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE FRAMEWORK:

## Understand and Integrate

- Lieberman’s Affect Labeling Theory
- Gottman’s Emotion Coaching Theory
- Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory
- Pennebaker’s Expressive Writing Theory

## Aware and Attune

- Bowlby & Ainsworth’s Attachment Theory
- Siegel’s Interpersonal Neurobiology
- Porges Polyvagal Theory
- Kaba-Zinn’s Mindfulness Theory



## Regulate and Grow

- Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory
- Deci & Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory
- Bandura’s Social Learning Theory
- Murray & Kochanska’s Co-regulation & Executive Function Development
- Dwek’s Growth Mindset Theory



## Scientific Grounding

This framework is rooted in well-established child development and psychology theories, such as **attachment theory**, which emphasizes the importance of strong emotional bonds between children and caregivers. It also draws from **emotion regulation**, focusing on how children learn to manage and express their emotions effectively. Additionally, it incorporates principles from **social learning theory**, which highlights the role of observation and imitation in acquiring behaviors, and **neurodevelopment**, which examines how the brain's structure and function develop over time.

**Notice It · Name It · Nurture It** translates complex science into an accessible relational process that parents can apply in everyday interactions with their children.

## NEED SUPPORT?

We also offer **individual coaching** if you’d like to better understand your child’s behavior patterns and learn how to apply this framework in everyday situations — all in about four weeks.



[SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT COACHING]



# 5 BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR: CHILD PSYCHOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT SIMPLIFIED

## WHY KIDS “ACT OUT” AND DON’T “USE THEIR WORDS”

Young children do not process emotions the way adults do. Their brains are still under construction. We like to use a very simple way to explain how the brain handles emotion. By understanding this, parents can adapt how they respond.

### Frontal Cortex

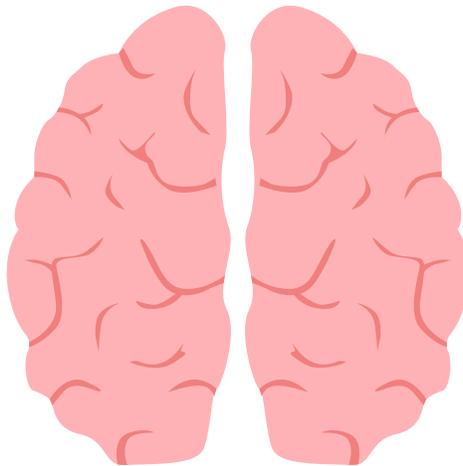
#### EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

The front brain is responsible for planning, problem-solving, impulse control, and self-regulation. These skills develop slowly over time and are not available during emotional overwhelm.

### Left Brain

#### LOGIC & LANGUAGE

The left side of the brain supports **reasoning, language, and linear thinking**. A child cannot access this part of the brain while emotionally flooded.



### Right Brain

#### EMOTION PROCESSING

The right side of the brain is responsible for emotions, sensations, and felt experience. When a child is upset, this part of the brain becomes overwhelmed and the child is inside their feelings, not thinking about them.

### Hind Brain

#### SURVIVAL RESPONSES

If emotions remain overwhelming and unsupported, the hindbrain takes over to protect the child. This triggers automatic survival responses:

- fight (*tantrums, yelling, hitting, throwing, arguing*)
- flight (*running away, refusing, avoiding, pacing*)
- freeze (*shutting down, going silent, staring, “I don’t know”*)
- fawn (*people-pleasing, quick compliance, saying “sorry” to appease*)

At this point, behavior is driven by protection, not choice.

[SCAN TO LEARN MORE]

To learn more about best practices in emotional responsiveness, check out our online mini-course



“When a child is emotionally overwhelmed, they need help before they can reason their way through big feelings.”

# 6 BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR: CHILD PSYCHOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT SIMPLIFIED

## THE MEANING BEHIND COMMON BEHAVIORS

In parent coaching and workshops, I like to start with a simple explanation of child psychology and development. When we understand the developmental and psychological undertones of behavior, parenting becomes easier.

| Notice It                     | Nome It   | Norture It   |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Behavior                      | What Might Be Underneath  | What Growth is Needed                                    |
| Meltdowns & Tantrums          | Sensory overload or overwhelmed<br>(HALTSS: hungry, angry, lonely, tired, sick, scared) | Co-regulation, calm presence, environmental adjustment   |
| Defiance & Rebellion          | Need for autonomy or control<br>(SSFPF: safe, secure, freedom, power, fun)              | Explanations, choices, collaboration                     |
| Withdrawal & Shutting down    | Fear, shame, discouragement, overwhelm  | Safety, patience, invitation                             |
| Clinginess                    | Anxiety, insecurity, fear   | Reassurance, predictability, routines, secure attachment |
| Aggression & Sibling Conflict | Anger, threat response, immature moral reasoning  | Co-Regulation, Conflict Management Skills                |

☞ This isn't about diagnosing or excusing behavior. It's about learning what's going on so we can respond in ways that teach essential life skills.



# 7 BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR: CHILD PSYCHOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT SIMPLIFIED

## SCRIPTURE SAYS AND SCIENCE CONFIRMS

**Notice It · Name It · Nurture It™** is grounded in decades of research on emotional development, regulation, and attachment. But it didn't begin as a formula. It emerged as I noticed something deeper in the way science describes healthy parenting mirrors the way God consistently relates to His children.



### "God Sees"

Before God corrects, He sees the heart beneath the behavior. He meets people where they are in their struggle and invites them into something better.

#### Scripture repeatedly shows us a God who:

- Names what He sees before He acts (*Genesis 2:18, Exodus 3:7*)
- Notices emotional distress, not just outcomes (*Genesis 16:13*)
- Shows attentiveness that is relational, not reactive (*John 4:1-26*)

When parents learn to notice before reacting, they reflect that same attentiveness.



### "God Speaks Truth With Love"

God doesn't ignore emotion, and He doesn't shame it. He names what's happening in us with clarity and compassion.

#### In Scripture:

- Emotion is named, not avoided (*Psalms 42:5*)
- Truth and tenderness go hand-in-hand (*Ephesians 4:15*)
- Jesus names the emotion His words have stirred. (*John 16:6*)

Science tells us that naming emotions calms the nervous system. Scripture shows us that truth spoken in love brings freedom.



### "God Restores, Not Just Corrects"

God's goal has never been simply behavior modification. It has always been restoration of the heart so that what pours out of it is righteousness.

#### In Scripture, we see how God:

- Protects vulnerability while growth is still forming (*Isaiah 42:3*)
- Regulates before providing direction (*Psalms 23:2-3*)
- Provides discipline that is developmental, not punitive (*Hebrews 12:11*)

This is how emotional maturity is formed—slowly, relationally, and with grace.

In **Isaiah 44**, we see an example of the totality of God's response when His people's actions have led to turmoil. He recognizes their predicament, names their fear, explains how their actions led to this outcome, and then offers them a path toward redemption, should they so choose to take it. He promises to be with them along the way.

**Science explains how children grow. Scripture reveals why the relationship is the vehicle.** When parents practice *Notice It · Name It · Nurture It*, they are not choosing between faith and psychology. They are living at the intersection of both.



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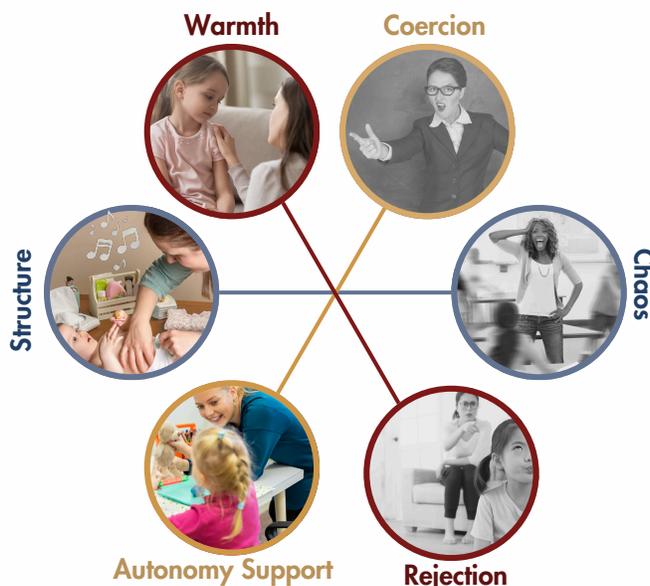
## HOW WE RESPOND SHAPES HOW THEY GROW

Children will move through essential milestones, but the success of each milestone significantly depends on how parents show up and respond in everyday moments. We call these **Parenting Dimensions**. Healthy development happens when children consistently experience the supportive side of each dimension.

### 1. Warmth versus Rejection

- **Warmth** includes responsiveness, empathy, affection, and emotional availability.
- **Rejection** includes emotional distance, criticism, dismissal, or conditional acceptance.

This dimension **reflects a child's sense of emotional safety**. Children who experience warmth are more likely to develop secure attachment and emotional confidence.



### 2. Structure versus Chaos

- **Structure** includes clear expectations, routines, and consistent follow-through.
- **Chaos** includes inconsistency, unpredictability, unclear limits, or lack of guidance.

This dimension **reflects how predictable a child's environment feels**. Structure helps children feel safe, oriented, and capable of self-regulation.

### 3. Autonomy Support versus Coercion

- **Autonomy** support includes choice, voice, and encouragement of age-appropriate independence.
- **Coercion** relies on pressure, control, threats, or compliance without understanding.

This dimension **reflects how a child's independence is supported or restricted**. Autonomy support builds intrinsic motivation, responsibility, and self-trust.

AVAILABLE INSTANTLY!

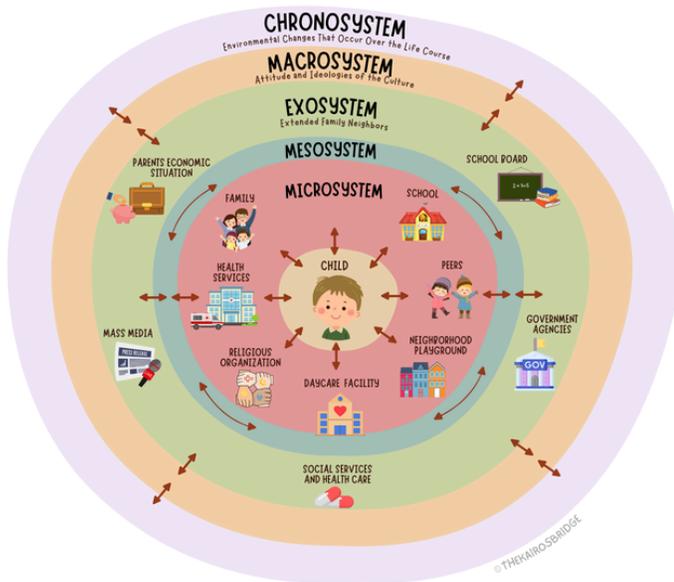
[SCAN TO LEARN MORE]

Learn more about how to use these parenting styles and dimensions so your kids can regulate emotions, problem-solve, and grow into resilient, emotionally intelligent adults.



# 9 BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR: CHILD PSYCHOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT SIMPLIFIED

## PARENT STRESS INDEX AND CHILD BEHAVIOR



### Development Doesn't Happen Alone: Why Surroundings Matter

According to well-known psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner, **children are shaped not only by who they are, but by the systems surrounding them.**

One of the most influential is what he calls the *mesosystem* — interactions between home, school, caregivers, routines, and relationships.

When stress increases in one part of the system, say at work for a parent, or at home for a teacher, **children feel it, even when nothing is said out loud.**

**Parental stress** can increase the emotional load children already carry, making regulation harder and behavior more problematic.

### Manifestations of Parenting Stress



The **Parenting Stress Index (PSI-4)** is a validated tool used by professionals to measure stress across three key domains: (1) Parent (2) Child (3) Relationship

#### 1. Parent Domain

Focuses on the **caregiver's internal experience.**

- ✔ Emotional exhaustion
- ✔ Self-doubt / loss of identity
- ✔ Anxiety or overwhelm
- ✔ Shows up as guilt, reactivity, feeling "on edge"

#### 2. Child Domain

Focuses on how the **child's temperament and behavior** are experienced.

- ✔ Big emotions
- ✔ Adaptability challenges
- ✔ Attention struggles
- ✔ Parenting feels demanding
- ✔ Stress reflects fit, not failure

#### 3. Parent-Child Relationship Domain

Focuses on **how connected** the relationship feels.

- ✔ Emotional closeness or strain
- ✔ Cooperation vs. conflict
- ✔ High stress → disconnection (even with love present)

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GUESS ...

We offer **evidence-based assessments** to measure where pressure is building and what support will be most effective. Then, we create a **personalized coaching plan** that supports both parent and child.

[SCAN TO LEARN MORE]



# 10 BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR: CHILD PSYCHOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT SIMPLIFIED

## HOW BEHAVIOR CHANGES AS CHILDREN GROW

Children don't outgrow emotional needs—they express them differently at each stage of development. That's why the same behavior can mean very different things depending on a child's age. Understanding where your child is developmentally helps you respond with wisdom instead of worry. Below is a brief preview of how Notice It · Name It · Nurture It™ shows up across common ages and stages.

| 0-1 YR  | 2-3 YR   | 4-5 YR  | 6-12 YR   | 13-20 YR   |
|---|--|---|---|--|
|    |   |    |   |   |
| <b>Infancy</b><br>Trust vs Mistrust   | <b>Toddlerhood</b><br>Autonomy vs Doubt  | <b>Early Childhood</b><br>Initiative vs Guilt   | <b>Middle &amp; Late Childhood</b><br>Industry vs Inferiority   | <b>Adolescence</b><br>Identity vs Identity Confusion   |
| <i>This stage builds the foundation for trust and emotional security.</i>   | <i>This stage is about supporting autonomy within safe limits.</i>   | <i>This stage shapes confidence and willingness to engage with the world.</i>   | <i>This stage is about building perseverance and self-belief.</i>   | <i>This stage forms identity anchored in relationship.</i>   |
| <b>Core Question</b><br><i>Can I trust the world?</i>   | <b>Core Question</b><br><i>Can I do things myself?</i>   | <b>Core Question</b><br><i>Is it okay for me to try?</i>  | <b>Core Question</b><br><i>Am I capable?</i>  | <b>Core Question</b><br><i>Who am I?</i>   |
| <b>What You Might Notice</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crying as primary communication</li> <li>Sensitivity to routines, tone, and touch</li> <li>Distress when needs aren't met quickly</li> </ul> | <b>What You Might Notice</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Power struggles</li> <li>Tantrums and emotional swings</li> <li>Strong reactions to limits</li> </ul>                                   | <b>What You Might Notice</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big emotions around mistakes</li> <li>Imaginative fears</li> <li>Testing limits through behavior</li> </ul>                    | <b>What You Might Notice</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comparison with peers</li> <li>Emotional shutdown or frustration</li> <li>Sensitivity to failure or criticism</li> </ul>       | <b>What You Might Notice</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pulling away emotionally</li> <li>Heightened sensitivity to respect and fairness</li> <li>Strong opinions and emotional intensity</li> </ul>                          |
| <b>What's Often Underneath</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dependence on caregivers for regulation</li> <li>Need for safety, consistency, and responsiveness</li> </ul>                               | <b>What's Often Underneath</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desire for autonomy</li> <li>Limited language and self-regulation skills</li> <li>Frustration when independence is blocked</li> </ul> | <b>What's Often Underneath</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiative and curiosity</li> <li>Sensitivity to approval or disapproval</li> <li>Growing sense of responsibility</li> </ul> | <b>What's Often Underneath</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing competence and self-worth</li> <li>Desire to feel skilled and valued</li> <li>Fear of not measuring up</li> </ul> | <b>What's Often Underneath</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identity exploration</li> <li>Desire for independence with ongoing need for connection</li> <li>Increased emotional depth without full regulation skills</li> </ul> |
| <b>How to Nurture</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond promptly and calmly</li> <li>Meet needs consistently</li> <li>Offer comfort before stimulation</li> </ul>                                   | <b>How to Nurture</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer simple choices</li> <li>Hold firm but calm boundaries</li> <li>Name emotions and model regulation</li> </ul>                             | <b>How to Nurture</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage effort over outcome</li> <li>Guide rather than shame</li> <li>Separate behavior from identity</li> </ul>                    | <b>How to Nurture</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affirm strengths and growth</li> <li>Normalize mistakes</li> <li>Focus on progress, not perfection</li> </ul>                         | <b>How to Nurture</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen more than lecture</li> <li>Offer guidance without control</li> <li>Stay emotionally present, even when pushed away</li> </ul>   |

# 1 1 NOTICE IT NAME IT NURTURE IT SCENARIOS: PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

## Bedtime Battle Zz,

**Scenario:** It's bedtime for your 5-year-old, but she keeps getting out of bed for one reason or another: water, a snack, a hug, or to see what you're doing.



Bedtime Battle

### NOTICE IT

**Acknowledge** their behavior.

*Note: If their behavior triggers anger or frustration in you, take a moment to pause and self-regulate before issuing corrective guidance.*

I see you're getting up again. What seems to be the problem? How can I help you get to sleep?

### NAME IT

**Listen** with empathy to their explanation. Be prepared to **offer verbal grounding of feelings, thoughts, and needs.**

*Note: The goal is to identify the underlying issue so new strategies can be put in place on future nights to minimize challenges.*

What thoughts are still running in your mind?

Sleep can be tough when we didn't eat all our dinner.

Bedtime can be difficult when it feels more fun to stay awake.

### NURTURE IT

**Give** attention, affection, explanation, and then expectations (learn more about the 4 S's of attachment in our coaching courses!)

*Note: Focus on bedtime in the moment; save the lessons-learned discussion for the next day. Identify the underlying need, then adjust the bedtime routine to support social, emotional & cognitive settling:*

- Skip dessert (avoid sugar rush)
- End screens 1 hour before bed
- Start bedtime 5–10 minutes earlier
- Give autonomy where possible (e.g., choice of toothpaste flavor, pajama selection, or storybook)
- Reflect together: gratitude, best/worst part of day, tomorrow's hopes

Sleep is important to stay healthy, help our brains grow, and have energy to play tomorrow.

Each time you get out of bed means we need to start bedtime 5 minutes earlier tomorrow.

## COMMON BEDTIME DEFAULTS

(and what they actually teach kids)

Yelling threats from afar... "Get back in bed or else..."

- **Relies on:** fear and power
- **Teaches:** I have to manage big feelings on my own before I'm ready
- **Misses:** building self-soothing and emotional security
- **Long-term cost:** heightened anxiety, insecure attachment cues, longer bedtime battles

Ignoring repeated requests... thinking "They're just stalling."

- **Relies on:** emotional withdrawal
- **Teaches:** my needs don't matter once the routine starts
- **Misses:** teaching how to express needs appropriately
- **Long-term cost:** escalated behavior to be seen or heard

Giving in out of exhaustion...

"Fine, just one more."

- **Relies on:** inconsistency
- **Teaches:** persistence works better than cooperation
- **Misses:** predictability and trust in boundaries
- The long-term cost: more resistance tomorrow night

Spending 20 minutes of calm, connected support often prevents 60+ minutes of arguing, resetting, and re-escalation.

## Playtime Disobedience

**Scenario:** It's time to head home from your kiddos' playdate. You've given a 10-minute and a 5-minute clean-up warning, but come to find they haven't even started. Now, you'll be late to pick up your other child, and you're frustrated by their disobedience and defiance.



### NOTICE IT

**Describe** the issue (without attacking their character)

*Note: If their behavior triggers anger or frustration in you, take a moment to pause and self-regulate before issuing corrective guidance.*

*I asked you to clean up 10 minutes ago. You haven't, and now we will be late.*

### NAME IT

**Consider** the potential barriers to obedience.

- Were they distracted and didn't hear you? (listening skills)
- Are they confused by where to start? (executive function planning skills)
- Are they emotionally overwhelmed – fear, sadness, anger (executive function emotional regulation skills)

*It looks like you didn't hear me.*

*I know stopping play feels frustrating right now.*

*Note: The goal is to identify the underlying issue so new strategies can be put in place for the future.*

### NURTURE IT

**Get** their attention, **use** verbal grounding, & **give** clear direction:

- Get at eye-level, explain the expectations, ask them to repeat back
- Chunk into small, clear steps. (Bonus: make it a game like "race to fill the block bucket" to really get them engaged)
- Empathize with their emotion, then use logic and language.

*First step is to put the building blocks in the bucket. Tell me when you're done...*

*It is sad when playtime ends. We must clean up if we want to be invited back. We hope to see them again next week.*

*Note: Their executive function is still developing, so they need clear, step-by-step instructions. Their emotions are overwhelming, so they need co-regulation before logic, decision-making, or problem-solving can make sense. Circle back later to describe any consequences, such as:*

- Next time, we will limit the number of toys to just one at a time
- Next time, play time will end 15 minutes early so you have time to clean up

## COMMON PARENTING DEFAULTS

(and what they actually teach kids)

Raising your voice or issuing consequences on the spot...  
"Fine—no more playdates."

- **Relies on:** fear and urgency
- **Teaches:** compliance matters more than understanding
- **Misses:** skill-building for transitions and planning
- **Long-term cost:** resentment, power struggles, repeated "defiance."

Assuming they ignored you on purpose... "They heard me. They just don't care."

- **Relies on:** intent attribution instead of development
- **Teaches:** mistakes are character flaws
- **Misses:** listening, planning, and task-initiation skills
- **Long-term cost:** shame and reduced motivation to cooperate

If you step in and clean up for them... "We're late—I'll just do it."

- **Relies on:** rescue under pressure
- **Teaches:** adults will take over when things get hard
- **Misses:** responsibility and follow-through practice
- **Long-term cost:** repeated dependence and future battles

Skill-building today reduces resistance tomorrow.

## Temper Tantrums, Power Struggles, and Big-Mad Meltdown Mode

**Scenario:** You picked your toddler up from PDO and needed to make a quick stop at the grocery store. You said “No” when she asked for candy, which turned into a tantrum that has now lasted the entire 20 minutes home.

### NOTICE IT

**Consider the triggers:** transition (cognitive load), after school (fatigue or hunger), lack of freedom, power, or fun

*Note: Long tantrums are often a sign of accumulated stress, not stubbornness. Also, be sure to regulate yourself, then co-regulate them.*

*I see you're having a really big reaction.*

### NAME IT

**Offer** verbal grounding to talk through their needs:

- Identify any **HALTSS issues** (hungry, angry, lonely, tired, sick, scared)
- If freedom, power, or fun are lacking, find creative ways to infuse those into the errands
- Before the next grocery trip, set expectations.

*It will take 10 minutes, we will only get things for dinner*

*You can choose to help me push the cart,*

*or grab the items from the shelf, or just ride along.*

*Note: During a tantrum, the toddler's brain is not available for teaching, reasoning, or consequences. The goal is regulation first, logic later.*

### NURTURE IT

**Connect** with their emotions, address underlying environmental needs, and then create opportunities for freedom, power, and fun:

- “I’m sorry the grocery store wasn’t any fun. What is something fun we could do now?” (addresses loneliness and gives them the freedom and power to choose the fun thing)

*It's been a long day at school. If you're hungry, let's choose a healthy snack.*

*I know you like candy, but we save that for big grocery days.*

*Note: if expectations had not been preset, consider avoiding any logical consequences this go-around. The toddler's brain will struggle to process why they are in trouble for something they didn't know was inappropriate.*



Temper Tantrums

## COMMON PARENTING DEFAULTS

(and what they actually teach kids)

Logic & repetition alone: “I said no. Stop crying.”

- **Relies on:** reasoning during dysregulation
- **Teaches:** emotions don't change outcomes, so escalate them
- **Misses:** co-regulation and emotional containment
- **Long-term cost:** longer, louder meltdowns over time

Threaten consequences mid-tantrum: “Keep this up &...”

- **Relies on:** fear and compliance
- **Teaches:** big feelings lead to punishment
- **Misses:** teaching emotional regulation skills
- **Long-term cost:** increased anxiety and power struggles

Giving in: “Fine—just take it.”

- **Relies on:** relief in the moment
- **Teaches:** emotional escalation moves boundaries
- **Misses:** frustration tolerance and flexibility
- **Long-term cost:** more frequent & intense tantrums

Disengage completely: “Just cry.”

- **Relies on:** emotional withdrawal
- **Teaches:** I'm alone with big feelings
- **Misses:** co-regulation and safety
- **Long-term cost:** slower development of self-soothing skills



**Toddler tantrums** are not problems to eliminate. They are **signals** that the brain needs help regulating. Spending a few intentional minutes to meet physical needs (hunger, fatigue), give expectations, offer calm presence & restore autonomy through small choices often shortens the meltdown and reduces the likelihood of the next one.

## Sibling Fights

**Scenario:** Your children are playing together when a disagreement turns physical or loud. Someone is yelling, someone is crying, and both are accusing the other of being “mean” or “not fair.” You’re tempted to jump in, assign blame, and restore peace as quickly as possible.

### NOTICE IT

**Assess** the situation for behaviors, emotions & triggers. Decide what level of conflict management support they need to resolve this. **Calmly** describe what you see without judgement.

*I hear loud voices and see you both upset.*

*Note: Regulate your triggers first, because children borrow regulation from adults before they learn to manage conflict themselves.*

### NAME IT

**Consider** what skills gap is showing up:

- Struggles with perspective-taking? (cognitive development)
- Emotions running too high for problem-solving? (emotional regulation)
- Lack of fairness, rules, or ownership? (moral development)
- Competing for attention or control? (relational needs)

*You feel it's unfair when your turn gets skipped.*

*You're both upset, which complicates problem-solving.*

*This feels unfair to each of you.*

*Note: Naming the experience validates both sides thus, helps calm the nervous system, prepares the brain for problem-solving and lowers intensity.*

### NURTURE IT

Let emotions settle, then **guide** (not dictate) the next steps.

- Separate children briefly only if needed for regulation
- Get at eye level and restate the problem neutrally
- Invite each child to share their perspective (one at a time)

**Offer** limited options if needed:

- taking turns
- trading roles
- find a new activity

End with **repair**: apology, restitution, reconnection to play

*Note: Conflict resolution skills develop slowly and require repeated practice. Sibling conflict is one of the primary ways children learn empathy, fairness, self-advocacy, accountability & reconciliation. Avoiding conflict robs children of these lessons. Coaching conflict builds them.*



Sibling Conflict

## COMMON PARENTING DEFAULTS

(and what they actually teach kids)

If you immediately assign blame: “Who started this?”

- **Relies on:** judgment and control
- What it teaches: conflict is about winning or losing
- **Misses:** perspective-taking and shared responsibility
- **Long-term cost:** defensiveness and rivalry

If you step in and solve it for them: “Just give it to your sister.”

- **Relies on:** adult authority
- **Teaches:** someone else will fix my conflicts
- **Misses:** negotiation and problem-solving skills
- **Long-term cost:** dependence and repeated conflicts

If you punish both children equally: “You’re both in trouble.”

- **Relies on:** convenience and symmetry
- **Teaches:** effort to resolve doesn’t matter
- **Misses:** moral reasoning and accountability
- **Long-term cost:** resentment and disengagement

If you demand apologies without processing... “Say you’re sorry.”

- **Relies on:** forced compliance
- **Teaches:** words matter more than understanding
- **Misses:** empathy and genuine repair
- **Long-term cost:** shallow apologies & unresolved conflict



# 12 UNDERSTANDING PARENT COACHING IS PARENT COACHING RIGHT FOR YOU?

## Why Would Someone Need A Parent Coach?

Great question! Early on, I wondered that too. It was only 2 weeks into my first parenting course that I realized how much the science had advanced in the area of child and adolescent development. I was grateful to have education, books, and course material for me to learn from. But what really changed my life was my **parent coach**.

**Experience** is the best teacher there is. **What's better than experience? Expertise!!** While many of us have great hands-on experience with our children, wouldn't it be great to have a "phone-a-friend" option to a parenting expert?



## What Makes a Parenting Coach an Ideal Expert?

Every parent wants to do right by their child, but no one hands us a roadmap. That's where coaching becomes life-changing.

There are many parent coaches out there. The thing you want to look for is someone with expertise in **child psychology and development**, coaching qualifications, and experience.

### The best parenting coaches bring expertise in:

#### Basic Psychological Needs of Children & Adolescents

Basic understanding of the core needs of children—such as **safety, love, autonomy, and belonging**—that help them grow emotionally and mentally healthy.

#### Developmental Processes

Recognizing **age-appropriate milestones** and brain development so expectations and guidance align with a child's stage of growth.

#### Behavioral Patterns & Emotional Regulation

Helps you understand why certain behaviors happen and teaching **healthy ways to manage emotions**.

#### Family and Other Contexts that affect Socio-emotional Adjustment

Helps you **look at the bigger picture**—how your home environment, stress levels, routines, and relationships influence a child's emotional and social well-being.



# 13 UNDERSTANDING PARENT COACHING WHAT COACHING CAN DO FOR YOUR FAMILY?



## FAMILY

**Better communication** — knowing how to listen and respond with clarity

**More confidence** — practical tools for everyday challenges

**Personalized guidance** — support tailored to your family's needs

**Less overwhelmed** — learning how to stay calm and present

**Clear goals** — a roadmap for the parent you want to become



## CHILDREN

**Improves behavior** — reduces aggression, defiance, impulsivity & tantrums

**Supports mental health** — lower anxiety, depression, withdrawal & low self-esteem

**Healthier boundaries & discipline** — what's modeled with warmth becomes a life skill

**Better social skills** — conflict management modeled at home applies in friendships

**Stronger executive function** — emotional regulation, problem solving & planning skills

# WE CAN HELP

Every parent-child relationship is unique. We work with you in coaching to identify exactly what you and your child need.



## KAIROS CALM: 4-WEEK RESET

- **4 Weekly 45-Minute** Virtual Coaching Sessions
- Personalized Behavioral Blueprint (covering routines, discipline, and positive reinforcement).
- Digital Parent **Reflection Journal** for daily tracking and insights.
- Weekly Email Check-ins for ongoing support and accountability.
- **Bonus:** Free "Calm Parent Toolkit"

\$125/Session



## 6-WEEK VIRTUAL GROUP COHORT

- Grounded in studies identifying 6 key attributes that reliably predict healthier parent-child relationships and improved long-term mental health.
- Join us for **6 weekly 1-hour sessions** in the evenings to explore the ways you can apply these principles in your everyday life.
- Participants will receive **recorded access to all sessions**
- Supportive group environment.

\$150+ /person



## NOTICE IT ~ NAME IT ~ NURTURE IT

- This is the **cornerstone of the work** we do at The Kairos Bridge
- A simple **three-step framework that transforms everyday parent-child interactions**
- Born from divine inspiration to guide parents with clarity and purpose.
- Rooted in **scripture**, supported by **science** for a balanced, confident approach.
- Helps you understand, respond, and nurture your child's emotional world

BOOK NOW



Ask Us About Our Free 15-Minute Initial Consultation

# ADD ON SERVICES

Each parent-child relationship is unique, as are the circumstances surround the relationship. We offer formal psychological testing and evaluation to pin-point the precise areas of challenge and track growth over time.



## PARENTING STRESS INDEX – SHORT FORM 4

- A **validated screening tool** is used to measure the level and sources of stress within the parent-child relationship
- **Parental distress, challenging child behaviors, and stressors** will be evaluated.
- A personalized and tailored coaching plan will be developed, in collaboration with your parent coach, to address day-to-day challenges and grow the relationship over time.

\$75.00



## BASC-PARENT CHILD RELATIONSHIP QUALITY (BASC-PQR)

- A **structured, research-based snapshot** of the overall quality of the parent-child relationship to *evaluate* elements of communication, emotional connection, trust, responsiveness, and behavior patterns within the home.
- Used to illuminate strengths, **highlight areas of relational strain, and identify patterns** that may be impacting behavior or family interactions
- Results guide a personalized coaching plan to strengthen the relational foundation at the heart of every parenting challenge.

\$75.00

# MINI COURSES

Discover a range of practical, engaging courses designed to help you grow, learn, and thrive. Each course is thoughtfully crafted to guide you step by step at your own pace. Browse our resources and find the course that's the perfect fit for your journey. Pricing varies by course—check each course for details.

With Free Guides + Q&A Support!



## NOTICE IT - NAME IT - NURTURE IT

A foundational framework, teaching parents to see behavior as communication, identify underlying needs, and respond with calm, connected strategies for healthy development.



## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT LIFE SKILLS

Conflict is inevitable where two or more individuals interact – it sits at the intersection of misaligned expectations. Learn how to understand child behavior, reduce power struggles, and teach healthy conflict skills rooted in emotional development, connection & calm problem-solving.



## THE 7 CONNECTING HABITS

Did you know you need 5 positive interactions to counterbalance each 1 negative interaction? It's simpler than you think, when you use the 7 Connecting Habits. Learn how to build trust, cooperation, and emotional safety through daily habits to reduce conflict and misbehavior.



## GROWTH MINDSET, GOAL SETTING & RESILIENCE

Equips parents and educators with neuroscience based tools to build confidence, grit, and positive learning identity.



## CRACKING THE CODE ON CHILD TEMPERAMENT

Helps parents and educators decode their child's natural wiring and adapt parenting, teaching and counseling strategies to reduce conflict and strengthen healthy development.



## COMMUNICATING ON THEIR WAVE LENGTH

The human brain is not fully developed until 23 to 25 years of age. No wonder our efforts to communicate with our kids so often miss the mark. Learn how the child's brain grows, processes language, and interprets emotion so you can be equipped to communicate grace and truth in a way that sticks!



## TAMING TANTRUMS

The primary driver of temper tantrums isn't defiance. Learn what fuels tantrums through executive function, attachment, and emotional regulation, and apply practical strategies to help your child develop life-long skills to regulate, recover, and build resilience in the face of frustration.



## MORNING MADNESS & BEDTIME BATTLES

Did you know there's a neurological reason for the stress during major transition times? It has to do with cortisol, melatonin, circadian rhythm, and executive function. Join us to learn a practical system for easing transitions, reducing chaos, and creating calm routines.



## GROWING EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT KIDS

Our own approach to emotions becomes our child's approach. Many of us grew up believing the lie that "feelings lie" when in fact, emotions were designed to help us grow. Learn the importance of emotion coaching through co-regulation, naming, and guiding big emotions, to help your child develop emotional intelligence.



## THE PARENTING STYLE THAT SETS THE STAGE FOR LIFE

Explore the four major parenting styles, their impact on behavior and brain growth, and how to cultivate warm (loving), balanced (boundaries & discipline), authoritative parenting for healthy development that predicts success in the classroom, in business, and in life relationships.



## THE SAFE BASE & SECURE SPACE OF HEALTHY ATTACHMENT

Attachment is all the rage right now – but do you know how secure or insecure attachment is formed? Better yet, do you know how to re-vector toward secure attachment, even if it started down the path of insecure? Find out how daily connection with the 4 S's builds trust, resilience and cooperation.

SCAN ME



Includes **FREE** downloadable guides for each course you purchase!

**PLUS More!** Visit our website to see the full list of courses



# ABOUT THE COACH

Child Psychology & Development Specialist

Hey there!

I'm **Bethany Heyne**, founder of The Kairos Bridge, and I'm on a mission to help every parent discover the secret I discovered over ten years ago in my first parenting class.

If parenting feels harder than you expected...

If you've ever wondered, *"Why does my child keep doing this?"*

If you've tried strategies that worked for other families but somehow didn't work for yours...

I want you to know this first: ***you are not failing.***

Parenting today sits at the intersection of rapidly evolving science, deeply ingrained upbringing patterns, and a genuine desire to raise children who are emotionally healthy, resilient, and connected.

Scripture reminds us that *"the purpose in a person's heart is like deep water, but one who has understanding draws it out"* (Proverbs 20:5).

Parenting, at its core, is not about managing behavior—it's about drawing out the heart of a child with wisdom, patience, and love. That can feel like a lot to carry, but you're not alone.

Most of us were taught how to manage behavior. Very few of us were taught how to understand it, or even shape it in the way scripture encourages us to live.



If this guide opened new ideas, we'd love to help you implement them. *Your parent-child relationship will thank you!*

**Join us for an upcoming parenting class!**

You don't need to overhaul your parenting. You just need a brief update on the latest evidence and how it is actually proving what Scripture has long held!

I'm so glad to partner with you!

*Bethany Heyne*

CHILD PSYCHOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST



# The Kairos Bridge, LLC

Bridging relationships with Gospel truth