



Navigating ADHD: Helping Children Thrive with Brain-Based Strategies

Dr. Nerissa Bauer

Interviewed by Dr. Laura Markham

Dr. Laura Markham (00:04):

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Hi there. I'm Dr. Laura Markham, founder of Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids and organizer of this online summit, Nurturing Hearts, Nurturing Minds, the Neuroscience of Peaceful Parenting. Our guest today is Dr. Nerissa Bauer, a developmental and behavioral pediatrician with extensive experience working with children who have ADHD. In addition to her private practice, Dr. Bauer is the founder of letstalkkidshealth.org, an online resource that helps parents better understand their children's behavior and promotes positive parenting practices. Dr. Bauer, I'm so excited to have you with us. Welcome.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer (00:52):

Thank you so much for having me.

Dr. Laura Markham (00:54):

I want to get right into questions about ADHD. So maybe to start, you could just tell us a little bit about what's happening. If I have a child... I mean, I might be an adult with ADHD also, especially if I have a child with ADHD, I know that can run in families. But

let's say I have a child with ADHD. How is that affecting my child's brain? What's going on?

Dr. Nerissa Bauer (01:21):

Yeah, that's a really good question and a great place to start because oftentimes, parents will have a lot of questions at the time of diagnosis. ADHD stands for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and I will be the first to say it is a terrible label because first of all, disorder tends to imply there's something wrong with you. And I always tell kids and parents, this does not mean that your brain is not working or that there's something wrong with you. It is just a difference, and it is something that as new research is coming out, I think many of us who do this work want to help reframe that because it does have a stigma. However, I will say to kids that this means that your brain thinks and learns a little bit differently. It's not good or bad. It just is. And we need to help kids start to begin to learn how to work with their brain.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer (02:17):

The name implies attention deficit, which means that sometimes you can't pay attention, but it doesn't mean you can't always pay attention. You can pay attention. The missing piece and the thing that kids and parents need to understand is that interest and motivation are absolutely crucial to help light up your brain. I think we have to spend some time with kids to, first of all, understand that nuance. You can pay attention when you're doing Minecraft or doing arts and crafts or reading books, whatever lights up your brain and helps you stay focused and engaged and interested. And then, I have them then think about what are the other things that it's not so interesting. And then, we start to build that awareness of how their brain works so that we can learn to work with it. But to get to answer your question, I tell parents that ADHD implies that the person who has it means that they have just differences in how they can regulate their attention, their impulses, as well as their emotions.

Dr. Laura Markham (03:32):

So it's interesting that the name for it, which as you say, is a terrible label, focuses on the child's movement if the H is in there for hyperactivity, but also on the attention or lack thereof. It doesn't focus on the impulses, and yet, when I hear from parents, impulses are such a big part of it because that's what gets in the way with emotional regulation and friendships and getting along with their siblings and cooperating with their parents. Talk to us about what's going on in the brain that influences the impulse regulation.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([04:04](#)):

Yeah. Well, I think to answer that question, we need to take a step back and understand that there are certain parts of the brain that are affected with ADHD, one being the frontal lobes here, and I always tell kids and parents that part of the brain is the last to mature. It takes up to age 25, 26 to fully mature. And so, that part of the brain is responsible for what we call executive function. Again, another big word, and I tell kids, adults use big words all the time, so let's break this down so that you understand it. But basically, it is the center of the brain that sort of coordinates everything going on in your life so that way, you can know how to pay attention, how to control your impulses, so you don't just blurt out answers. You're aware of everything going on. It's kind of like the air traffic controller of your brain.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([04:59](#)):

There's also the amygdala, which is the emotion processing center of the brain, which is also part of a larger system called the limbic system. And so, that part of the brain is also affected to a certain degree. But when we think about emotions and impulses, it's usually in response to the fact that something's happening in our environment and our emotion sort of gives us a clue that either we don't like it, we're uncomfortable, we just don't know how to handle it. It may bring up negative feelings in our body. And again, the most important thing for kids and parents to understand is when those things start happening, we need to start cueing our kids to realize, "Okay, hold on," and realize it's not anything to be afraid of, but to understand and start to recognize those cues within themselves so that way, they can pause, take a breath, scan the room, maybe think a little bit differently like, "Okay. Last time, this happened."

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([06:05](#)):

But again, all of these different skills that I'm talking about is part of the larger executive function that many times, individuals, especially kids, they're lagging in these skills. So one of the first things that we talk to parents about is even though your child is 11, 10, they may be functioning more at a eight, nine-year-old level because we know that kids with ADHD, they often have lagging skills in these areas. So it's really important that, I think, as soon as a diagnosis is made that kids and parents onboard together to understand what's happening so that way, we can begin to react a little bit differently, maybe have some self-compassion for what's happening, and remember that kids would if they could.

Dr. Laura Markham ([06:59](#)):

Yes. Yes. So it's helpful for parents to understand that there's something going on in their child's brain and nervous system that's different than theirs maybe so that they can have that compassion for their child to support their child.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer (07:13):

Yes. And it's not an excuse. It's an explanation. It's just that if we can kind of reframe and think, "Oh my gosh, why does this keep happening," just take a step back and think, "Okay, this behavior, while it's not the appropriate behavior what I was hoping, I obviously need to step back and figure out a way to teach that skill."

Dr. Laura Markham (07:37):

Yeah. So what can parents do, just everyday strategies? What are the important things for parents to be doing to structure the home environment so the child can thrive, the child who has ADHD?

Dr. Nerissa Bauer (07:54):

Yeah, so there are a couple ways that we can... Early on in the process, we start to kind of focus on, first of all, learning everything that we can about ADHD, and especially for kids, there are lots of different ways to do that. One way is just talking about it. I like to use children's books as a way to start the conversation because sometimes some kids are a little bit more sensitive to if parents will approach them and say, "You do this." We don't want them to shut down. We want them to have an invitation to explore like, "Yes, sometimes that does happen to me," and I find that children's books or different things that you're watching on TV where there's a character who may have ADHD can help kids sort of see that outside of themselves and be much more willing to think about, "Oh, does that happen to me, too? That does happen to me."

Dr. Nerissa Bauer (08:52):

So I think it starts with education. And then, for parents to recognize that, first of all, there's lagging skills, we just talked about that, and then thinking about what is that ABCs of the behavior, what's happening right before the behavior happens, what the behavior actually is, and then what they have done in the past that may or may not have gone well. So that way, we have a starting point so that we can begin to peel back what is really happening in those situations, especially if they're recurring. So that way, we can help parents begin to come up with an action plan.

Dr. Laura Markham (09:37):

If they see the pattern of what's happening, "My kid always has a hard time with transitions, or when I ask them to stop doing something and start doing something else, they can't do it," so at that point, the parent can maybe work on a plan for how to make it easier for the child.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([09:53](#)):

Yes. And a lot of times kids with ADHD need to have a multisensory approach. Many of us with ADHD, we have what we call time blindness, and so we're not really good at estimating time either how long it takes, or we get hyperfocused in on something, and then before we know it is time to go and you haven't even yet put on your shoes. And again, that can be really frustrating for lots of parents. So thinking of ways to externalize time is a really important thing that parents can start to do right away. I think it's helpful, especially with the visual timers that show passage of time is really helpful, a way to cue the brain that, "Okay, this is how much time is passing" and then pairing that visual with multisensory, so putting your hand on the child's shoulder saying, "Okay, look. Look at how much time is left. What do you have to do next? Okay. Wow, that's fantastic. I see you doing it. Okay, let's see if we can beat the timer. What's next?"

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([11:01](#)):

So sometimes you have to stay with that child because again, ADHD, they get easily distracted. So I think it's part and parcel of learning what an ADHD brain can kind of have challenges with, but then learning how to give the supports in such a way that works with their brain and breaks it down into steps. Again, knowing that child, even though chronologically may be a certain age, we may have to rethink our plan to meet them where they are and break it down in smaller chunks, stay close to them, walk them through the process.

Dr. Laura Markham ([11:43](#)):

So when you say lagging skills, these are skills that can be developed, but the parent has to do the extra work to figure out, "What is the skill that's lacking and how can I support my child to develop it?" You just mentioned time. They're like, "Why don't they manage their time so they can get ready for school?" Well, because they're "time blind," quote, unquote, but they can learn to internalize time if we do certain things that will help them. That's what you're saying. So that's an example, but there are many lagging skills that parents can address.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([12:18](#)):

Yes. And the reason I like to kind of flip this on its head and transform a problem behavior into a lagging skill is because it is absolutely teachable, but we have to be good detectives and get curious about, "Okay, how is my child doing right now? Where do we want to eventually get to," and then think about how can we break this down for them. And yes, it will take extra time and effort and investment on behalf of the parent, but it is well worth it because again, we have to meet kids where they are. We can teach them. We have to keep in mind they would if they could, but this is clearly a time where we need to kind of rethink this and break it down into smaller steps.

Dr. Laura Markham ([13:06](#)):

So we're thinking of skills like time, but we also talked about the skill of impulse regulation, impulse control, and you mentioned the amygdala. I think many people watching know the amygdala is the alarm system, but tell us how when you're diagnosed with ADHD, that child probably has more issues dealing with their active amygdala than another kid, and how do we teach the child to manage that? That's their body. They're getting those signals. What's going on for them and how do we help them to manage that, to learn a skill to manage that?

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([13:51](#)):

Yeah, so thank you for that reminder because I think what we're really talking about is nurturing kids' metacognition, and again, another big word, but we're helping them develop thinking of thinking and learning how to pivot and monitor their behavior. That is an advanced executive function skill, and that's why parents, because we're older, we have many more years of experience, we need to give them some of our executive function. That's why we need to co-regulate with them because they just don't have that skill yet. So I think the first thing to do is, number one, start talking with your kiddo about what's happening and just say, "I have noticed that sometimes when your brother comes into the room and you're playing with something, and of course, he's younger than you, he takes it, you sort of get upset." I mean, just these are the facts. That's how we approach and start that conversation, "So I'm wondering though, what can we start doing when that happens? What do you notice about what you're feeling," and start having that discussion.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([15:04](#)):

When I meet families for the first time when I'm assessing a child's emotional literacy, so to speak, I focus on kind of the basic ones first to see if they can give me examples of happy, sad, scared, worried, mad, and frustrated. But then I also take it another

step further and ask them, "How do you show people these emotions? Do you even know what I mean by that?" Because I want to begin to help them understand, first of all, we have emotions. Everybody does, but how am I showing this to the world? Happy, how do you show it? Oh, I'm smiling, and I'm kind of light in my feet, and when I'm walking, I might be humming. And then, we talk about, "Well, how do you show sadness? How do you show mad and frustrated?" If your child has a hard time even coming up with what they do, that is where we need to begin.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([15:56](#)):

We cannot expect a child to be able to, first of all, recognize or understand that emotion until they are putting the pieces together, so we want to start with that and kind of figure out, be detectives, to understand where are they with emotion literacy and help them begin to put words and cueing into their own bodies so that we can then teach the skill of, "Wow. You get really frustrated when that happens. So now, we need to figure out what can make us help tame those emotions from bubbling up like a volcano because it's okay to feel frustrated, but it's not okay to hit or yell." And so, having that ability to talk with a child to come up with a different game plan, they need to first recognize that emotion and how to tell that their body is sending them signals that way.

Dr. Laura Markham ([17:02](#)):

Which sounds like an executive function.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([17:05](#)):

It is.

Dr. Laura Markham ([17:06](#)):

Emotional regulation we know is related to the prefrontal cortex, so you're actually teaching the brain, and I guess repeated awareness, repeated experience changes the brain. So repeated awareness of your own emotions would give you more ability to read your own emotions, so we're coaching the child to develop that lagging skill of noticing their own emotions so they can learn to manage them.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([17:34](#)):

That's right. And it's through these consistent conversations and hopefully close to the inciting incident as possible, obviously after everybody's calm, to just be like, "Hey, let's talk about that. That didn't go quite as expected, right? Gosh, how are you feeling?" And if your child says, "I don't know," which sometimes they will say that, you

can then step in and say, "Well, I noticed that your fists were clenched. You are kind of getting that grimace. You are making that sound. And I noticed that when in the past you've done that, that means you're frustrated. You're getting kind of more upset before you get really angry and blow your top." So again, I like to take the stance of seeing if your child can recognize first, and if they don't, it's okay to give your observation, but again, it's just observation. You're giving data. You're saying, "This is what I notice," instead of, "You do this."

Dr. Laura Markham ([18:37](#)):

You're not judging.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([18:38](#)):

Yes.

Dr. Laura Markham ([18:39](#)):

You're not judging. You're not controlling. You're not shaming you. You're just helping the child become more aware. And a lot of times, parents ask about social skills for their kid who struggles with ADHD because sometimes they can struggle to form friendships. So this sounds like it applies there as well.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([19:00](#)):

Yes. This-

Dr. Laura Markham ([19:01](#)):

How do you support the... Yeah, go ahead.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([19:03](#)):

Yeah, this framework is a really great way. Again, if you can keep in... First of all, when you notice these things, as parents, we may feel sad for our kids. We may feel embarrassed for them. We may feel disappointed that, "Oh my gosh, you're grieving. Oh my gosh. Why doesn't he have more friends?" So we have to always get in touch with our own feelings too so that we're in the right headspace to be able to sit with our child calmly to kind of just problem solve. Think about this. And again, I love falling back on that detective hat. Put our detective hat on because then that way, we can kind of work together to kind of figure out what is happening when we go to the playground and you want to approach a friend. How does that go?

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([19:50](#)):

So again, when you're watching and if you see any problem issues, use that detective stance and say, "Next time we go, let's kind of figure this out. Let's spy on what's happening." And then, we can also use that experience to look at, "Next time we go to the playground, let's see what other people do first. Let's spy on them too and see what do we like that's going well." So that way, we can be like, "Huh, I wonder if you could do that, too. That looks pretty easy, right," and sort of have an appropriate model that the child can emulate as well because sometimes with, again, with ADHD, our attention is kind of going all over the place. We don't know where to focus our attention.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([20:35](#)):

But by having these intentional conversations with our kids and in the moment, without judgment or shame, setting it up so that way, as we're approaching the playground, having a discussion like, "Okay, we've got to have our spy glasses out. First, before we even get out of the car, we're going to look and see what are the kids doing, how are they playing together, how are they approaching other kids," and seeing for appropriate ways of doing that. "Oh, wow, that's a good way to do that. Let's try it. Let's see what happens when you do that." So again, helping them build that awareness, but then talking about it so that way, it's a definable action plan because sometimes, again, if you just let kids just go out because they're super excited, sometimes that impulsivity factor, they forget what they're supposed to be doing.

Dr. Laura Markham ([21:30](#)):

Yeah. So social detective, conversations about emotions to be more aware. What other specific activities or habits can help kids to develop those lagging skills?

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([21:48](#)):

Yeah, I mean, I think one of the things as a physician that I feel really strongly about is obviously, when we make the diagnosis of ADHD, sometimes we start talking about medicine, and pills don't teach skills. And that's why I am loving this conversation because yes, I prescribe medicine, and it can help, but it's not the be-all end-all. And what we're really talking about here is how to develop the skills so that way, even though we may have medicine on board, we've got to do the other work with the lagging skills.

Dr. Laura Markham ([22:25](#)):

Yeah, beautiful. Yes, yes.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([22:28](#)):

So some of the other things that parents may want to consider, especially early on in the diagnosis, is thinking about, well, first of all, "Is my child getting enough sleep?" Because sleep plays such an important and crucial factor in helping our brain function optimally, and that's one of the big things that people with ADHD struggle with is adequate sleep. So we want to make sure that our kids are getting the necessary amount of sleep, but not just in terms of hours, but the quality of sleep as well. We also-

Dr. Laura Markham ([23:00](#)):

How can a parent evaluate that? Is there a way for a parent to evaluate? I mean, there's all kinds of questions like helping them fall asleep. Is melatonin an okay idea? How do we evaluate the quality of the sleep?

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([23:14](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. So I will sort of think about it in a couple different ways. First of all, I ask, "How many hours of sleep is your child getting?" And there are a certain number that we know developmentally, a child should be getting. Typically, let's say an eight to 12-year-old should be getting between nine to 12 hours of sleep. Younger kids need more hours, and then as you get older, your body needs tend to decrease. But in general, that's a good number to keep in mind. So we first talk about the total amount of sleep they're getting per day. And then, we evaluate the quality of that sleep, especially if kids are super restless or they're having lots of frequent night wakings and they need to go to mom and dad's room a lot. I mean, it's just disrupting the sleep cycle and the different stages of sleep. So we're not ever getting to that restorative sleep that we need if they're waking up multiple times for lots of different reasons.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([24:18](#)):

So we talk about that. What are some things that hinder a child getting consistent number of hours of sleep, but in a good amount of time? So that speaks to quality. And then, how is the child's behavior upon awakening? Are they ready to go? Are they feeling rested or are they still really tired? And so, that can kind of have parents think about the quality of sleep and then also the timing of sleep. So melatonin is really helpful in some regards if a child's sleep wake cycle is really off, especially our teenagers or kids who do a lot of video games and the blue lights, and it messes up our melatonin production. So it's really important that quality, quantity, and the timing of sleep, it works with the child.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([25:18](#)):

In addition to sleep, we also think about helping kids understand the role of nutrition because we need to fuel not just our bodies, but our brain. And the big part there is protein at every meal. I always talk to kids about carbohydrates are great, the waffles, the cereals, whatever, but it only gives you a short boost, and then it's like a quick drop-off, and nobody does well. When we're feeling those fluctuations in our blood sugar, our emotions go awry. We get hangry. So having a protein at every meal ensures that our brain has adequate fuel to do all it needs to do throughout the day and keeps us more even.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([26:04](#)):

Physical activity, we need to make sure that we're moving our bodies and getting outside, having face-to-face time rather than screen time with our friends. There is such a big role of physical activity. The American Academy of Pediatrics really recommends that all school-aged children get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity every day. And so, that is such an important self-care skill that we need to make sure our kids are doing.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([26:31](#)):

And then also, screen time moderation. We live in a world of screens, and helping our kids understand that what we take in on screens are through our eyeballs, which connects to our brain directly. And some kids are super sensitive to those imagery or whatever's happening on the screen, and helping them develop a sense of, "I've noticed when it's time to get off of the screen that it's hard for you. Have you noticed how you're feeling when it come?" And again, having those conversations so that they're beginning to tune in to how their body is feeling.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([27:08](#)):

So those four areas are what I sort of lump under self-care strategies that we begin to help teach our kids with ADHD because we need to help our brain function optimally. And while they may or may not be on medication, these are some of the things that we want our kids to be in tune with from an early age.

Dr. Laura Markham ([27:30](#)):

Great. So while we're on screens, let me ask you, a lot of parents who have kids who struggle with ADHD say that their kid seems more addicted to the screen than their other kids do, that there's something that goes on in the ADHD brain that needs the screen in a whole different way. Can you tell us about that?

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([27:55](#)):

Yeah. So with individuals with ADHD, we know that there's two neurotransmitters which are in limited supply. So dopamine and norepinephrine, these are two of our neurochemicals in our brain that our body produces, but we don't have enough of. Dopamine is our feel-good, happy chemical that we get when we're doing something interesting, exciting. And when kids are watching screens or playing video games, we're getting those small hits of dopamine because it's like, "Ooh, I got to the next level. Ooh, I got this. Ooh, wow." It's like all those little dopamine hits. And over time, kids' brains just need more and more and more of that. If they're using screen time a lot, their brain is getting conditioned to needing more and more dopamine. And so, sometimes kids with ADHD, we see definite screen time issues because they are super sensitive to that need to turn their attention, and that's what sustains attention, dopamine.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([29:00](#)):

So our brain lights up whenever we are doing something we feel good about, and we're happy and we're interested. We're getting a lot of dopamine flooding our brain at that time. And again, that's partly some of the education about how our ADHD brain is working. We need to help parents understand that when a kid is interested and motivated, their brain is naturally sending out those dopamine signals, and our brain is able to sustain attention, but it's the transition off of something or from something pleasurable or preferred to non-preferred, that's when we see those big emotions, or it's really hard to stop because our brain is relying on that dopamine.

Dr. Laura Markham ([29:46](#)):

And so your child is not being difficult at that moment. Their brain needs that dopamine, they feel, and it's being taken away from them. What can the parent do to support the child in that moment or just in general? To have more dopamine in other areas of their life, that would be one strategy, but you tell us what should the parent do?

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([30:08](#)):

Yeah. So in the moment, let's say transitioning from screens or video games and all of that, I mean, again, I think being a detective, understanding, "This is what I observed. This is hard for you, and it causes me to get frustrated. I don't like the yelling, so we've got to come up with a different game plan." So again, just calling out the facts, what you see, having a conversation with your child and saying, "I understand that you want to do screen time. I've noticed this, so I want to let you

have some of that time, but when it's time to get off, we need to transition well." So again, part of that is the visual timer, setting those expectations.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([30:53](#)):

And if kids get super hyperfocused, then helping them build awareness like putting that visual timer in front of that video game or the iPad and saying to them, "Okay, you have 30 minutes, and then once this red is gone, I need you to come and check in with me. We need to walk away and stop." And if they cannot do that, then we need to come back again and say, "Okay. It's either we don't do this, or we can work on this." So again, coming up with different strategies to reinforce the positive behavior when they are able to step away when they see that time pass.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([31:36](#)):

Or like for my son, he's now 17, but there was a period of time when I had to be like, "Okay, when your timer is off, you need to come in and stop the game. Come and talk with me," because otherwise, he would sit there forever. And it was through mutual understanding and communication and collaboration that he learned to look at that timer, and he knew that before he started another round, he only had five minutes left. And usually, that round is going to take longer, so he would come and talk to me and say, "I know I only have five minutes, but I want to do one more round. Is that okay?" And that was at least better than not coming.

Dr. Laura Markham ([32:19](#)):

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Is there a way that parents can support their child to develop more dopamine? I mean, their brain is not making as much dopamine as their brother's brain, let's say, but is there a way parents can support that?

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([32:37](#)):

Yeah. I mean, part of that IS trying to help understand what feeds or ignites your brain, what lights it up.

Dr. Laura Markham ([32:46](#)):

Okay.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([32:48](#)):

And having those conversations with them, because yes, video games or whatever it is IS really great, but we can't be spending all the time doing that.

Dr. Laura Markham ([32:59](#)):

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. And so, in your explanation to your child is that your brain just works differently. That's great. It removes some of the shame or stigma. But most kids at some point are going to say, "Mom, Dad, the teacher yells at me. I find that the other kids can do things I can't do with their attention. I just can't stay focused on this, or I can't control myself." They'll find they're struggling. And so, they say, "You say it's fine to have ADHD, but I think my brain isn't working right." What do you say to that child that helps diminish that, that helps protect their self-esteem?

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([33:47](#)):

Yeah. I mean, first of all, I like that kids are able to verbalize that they understand that there's differences, which we always want to applaud our kids and be able to say, "Thank you for sharing your voice about this because it's important." However, it's also important to recognize that while your brain does work a little differently, there are ways that we can learn how to work with it. So we never want to use having ADHD as an excuse. Right?

Dr. Laura Markham ([34:25](#)):

Yeah.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([34:25](#)):

And so, we want to make sure that we help our kids understand that there are certain things that are expected of them during the school day and how does that behavior impact what other kids think of them or their teacher may think of them, helping them cultivate that perspective taking. But we never want our kids to be like, "Well, I have ADHD," or "I forgot my medicine." That's never okay. And I think, again, part of it is like, "Okay, buddy, I understand that that was really hard for you, so let's think about different ways that we can go about this."

Dr. Laura Markham ([35:08](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Next time you're in that situation, what could you do differently?

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([35:13](#)):

Yeah.

Dr. Laura Markham ([35:15](#)):

Well, thank you. This is so helpful to think about how parents can relate to their child in a way that fosters more self-awareness in the child. And it sounds like that alone

develops executive function. That all of what you're talking about, everything we've discussed today really develops executive function, and that, in fact, changes the brain and makes it more possible for kids to develop self-regulation, impulse control, et cetera. Is that right?

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([35:48](#)):

That is right. Consistency, practice, and that self-awareness, and just having honest conversations with your child and being like, "Okay, that was really hard, but let's think about what it is that you did well, and then how can we learn from this?" I think that's the biggest take home is it's possible to teach your kids these skills. Yes, they are lagging, but again, they just need our help and assistance. I always remind parents, the first time your child took that first step, we didn't reprimand them. Instead, we were like, "Oh my gosh. Wow. You can do it. Yeah, try it again."

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([36:34](#)):

So if you can keep that memory in your head that while this behavior may not be the same as learning how to walk, it kind of is because they are just learning these skills. They're not trying to do this on purpose to you and make you upset, right? They are truly trying, but we need to sort of recognize that we need to meet them where they are. And if you have any concern whatsoever, reach out to your child's doctor. There are other people on your child's team to rely on. You don't have to be the only person to do this, so it's really important for parents to recognize that there are other people that want to help them.

Dr. Laura Markham ([37:20](#)):

Yes. Beautiful. So Dr. Bauer, how can parents find you? I know you have Let's Talk Kids Health. Tell us.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer ([37:28](#)):

Yes, thank you for... Thank you. So my website is letstalkkidshealth.org, and I have a private practice part-time in Carmel, Indiana, where I see one-on-one patients, but I also have a lot of resources for free on my website. I have a YouTube channel, and then I also have courses for kids and parents. One is called TEACH Me ADHD, and this was designed during COVID actually, but it's for kids eight to 12 who have a diagnosis of ADHD to take with their parents, because again, I think it's really important to onboard kids and parents at the same time, and it's a Zoom class with up to 11 other families. So the cool thing about it is that kids get to see other kids just like them, and parents get the ability to see that there are other parents who have the same

questions. And so, we teach them these skills together. We have family missions. We become detectives, so it's a lot of fun.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer (38:32):

And we also have a new program just for teens, which is the Director's Cut. So instead of teens becoming detectives, they become directors of their lives. And so, again, teaching executive functioning skills at that level so that way, kids and teens can feel empowered to understand how their brain is working and what they can do.

Dr. Laura Markham (38:52):

Wonderful. That sounds terrific for teens, really. Exactly what a teen would respond to. Thank you so much. It's been such a pleasure to meet you and to speak with you today.

Dr. Nerissa Bauer (39:02):

Thank you for the opportunity. It was my pleasure.