

MISSION: CONTROL!

A BIG FEELINGS ADVENTURE!



Parent Power Pack

"Impact of Books On Readers' Real Lives"

By

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Global research shows that one of the skills children will need for meeting tomorrow's jobs and challenges begins at the earliest stages of life – creative problem-solving. Preparing children now and continuing that preparation over time demands guidance by adults so that children practice and learn how to welcome challenges, take risks, persist when something is not easy, be an agile thinker, demonstrate grit, be resilient, build a growth mind-set, have self-confidence, imagine being successful despite failures, and more.

(all themes embedded in *Mission:CONTROL! A Big Feelings Adventure*)

Solving problems pops up in all areas of a child's development such as social, emotional, cognitive, physical, language, and creativity. Embracing the challenges can lead to more independence, less frustration and avoidance, more collaborative interactions, increased self-esteem, courage, and more independence.

When children have learned about and practiced strategies for solving problems, they are more likely to feel confident and empowered to overcome future obstacles. A few ways adults can help children build their skills include letting them make choices, allowing them time to figure things out on their own, offering gentle guidance if stuck, providing praise for the problem-solving process they try, and providing opportunities to practice critical thinking, and creativity.

Another important way to build problem-solving skills is through books. Books play a very important role in enriching children's lives. They help children interpret the world around them. Children typically see them as pleasurable, rewarding and

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worthy of imitation, and can even be a way to bond with the person reading the story. They enrich children's lives. They expand children's imagination, spark curiosity

and improve thinking skills. Children know that books have problems or conflicts that are described and then resolved. They make connections between conflicts in books and problems in their own lives. They partake in a character's transformative adventure and are then inspired to take on one of their own in real life.

Mission:CONTROL! A Big Feelings Adventure checks off all of these boxes. It has a relatable problem and models for children how to resolve the problem. Joseph has big feelings and an imaginary adventure wherein he resolves the problem. As a pediatric occupational therapist, children I work with face problems similar to Joseph's. I use the book to help them apply what Joseph did in the story to solve his problem so they can practice doing the same in their lives.

Below I have given examples of effective responses to the top three challenges children I work with struggle to resolve: stopping when asked, accepting "no", and doing something they don't want to do.

The first problem-solving step I take is to share my calm with them (slow down, simplify, be present). Meeting them where they are emotionally and acknowledging their feeling that something is just "too much" is my next step. The final step is to solve the problem. Sometimes children can think of their own solution, sometimes they express their frustration and need help from me, sometimes they can remember a strategy they have used before, and sometimes we work together to fine tune the language, so it feels better. The responses below are real ones kids have suggested.

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If someone asks me to stop playing something and it seems “too much” to stop, instead of having a big reaction to a small problem like Joseph did in the book, I could say:

“I would like to put my bike away myself.”

“Please don’t take my ipad out of my hands.”

“I’m disappointed I have to stop. I was having fun.”

“When can I build with Legos again?”

“Shield Down! Laser Up!” (You have to read the book to understand this one!)

If someone asks me to do something I don’t like and it seems “too much” to do it, instead of having a big reaction to a small problem like Joseph did in the book, I could say:

“All this writing is TOO MUCH!”

“I’ve had enough sitting.”

“I need help with the noise.”

“I need a break.”

“Upward and onward!” (You have to read the book to understand this one too!)

If someone tells me I can’t have something I want and it seems “too much” to listen, instead of having a big reaction to a small problem like Joseph did in the book, I could say:

“OK. Can you take a picture of it?”

“I will just do it.”

“I will eat it because it will make my legs grow.”

“First I will eat my protein, then I’ll have my mac ‘n cheese.”

“Stay Strong!” (You’ll get it if you read the book!)

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These examples show that children yearn for growth, they want to overcome obstacles, they want to see themselves as capable, they want to feel empowered in their lives, they want to see their future selves as successful. Reading books inspires children to be the hero of their own story, the one who can overcome obstacles through solving problems. And if children can overcome obstacles in their own lives now, they can dream about making an impact in their communities, their jobs, and even the world in the future.

Resources:

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/problem-solving-action/>

Ages & Stages: Helping Children Adjust to Rules & Routines

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/ages-stages-how-children-learn-solve-problems/>

Ages & Stages: How Children Learn to Solve Problems

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/how-you-can-help-children-solve-problems/>

How You Can Help Children Solve Problems

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/ages-stages-figuring-it-out/>

Ages & Stages: Figuring it Out

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<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/problem-solving-action/>

Problem Solving in Action

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/learning-about-life-through-books/>

Learning About Life Through Books:

King of the Playground by Phyllis Naylor

Tercules by Marcy Pusey

Weirdo and Willy by Marcy Pusey

Speranza's Sweater by Marcy Pusey

How Big is Your Brave? By Ruth Soukup

Make Social Emotional Learning Stick by Elizabeth Sautter

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