



## Meeting needs

In our previous Newsletter, we started to talk about the principle of Empowering, which includes the ecological (environment) and physiological (physical) strategies.

Remember that *Empowering* means to enable or give power to someone. In this particular case we will focus on preparing the stage for success as we meet the most basic needs in order to move to the next step. We enable our children to connect with others, when we provide the healthy conditions and safe environment they need.

**Recapitulating from last week, ecological or environmental strategies include:**

- Ensuring smooth transitions for children, which translates in letting them know in advance how the day will look like and give them kind warnings before switching from one activity to another 15, 10 or 5 minutes in advance.
- Creating a Life Book, Memory Books, Storytelling, and even encouraging them to journal. Allowing them to have a physical and emotional space to communicate their emotions, hopes, fears and dreams.
- As well as daily and family rituals.

Daily transitions are the "joints" that connect daily experiences. These pose challenges for children who are fear-driven and for those with poor self-regulation. Just like life transitions do as they continue to develop, that's why providing as possible, a safe and predictable environment and letting them know in advance when possible, will help them feel more safe to connect, learn and receive from us.

Many times it's something simple what causes the difficult behavior. But when we look for ways to make their day more predictable and walk with them being attuned to their feelings, it will help them go through the difficult seasons and moments they will face with less fear.

Following with the *physiological strategies*, we must make sure to meet the basic needs for the well functioning of the body of these children and teenagers God has brought into our lives though adoption or foster care.

It's important that they have *access to snacks and nutritious meals every 2 to 3 hours* and have a *balanced diet* that includes protein, vegetables, fruits and carbohydrates. If your child as a special need, make sure to take in consideration what your doctor or nutritionist recommends.

Many times our children have a sense of emptiness because they experienced starvation and may want to eat more than what they need, or maybe they hoard and hide food in their rooms, or get angry because you ask them to wait for dinner and they don't trust you will feed them.

Some of the ways you can help them could be:

1. having healthy snacks available so they can see,
2. establishing and maintaining family rituals for dinner time.

In this way, with time, they will get used to the routine and know what to expect which will make it less difficult for them to face their fear. We as the adults in charge of their wellbeing and care, can show and assure them with words and actions that we will care for them and provide what they need.

*Constant hydration* also helps the proper functioning of their brain and body as they grow and learn. Drinking water every 2 hours is the recommendation. If necessary, get a water bottle of their favorite superhero or character or find a creative way to encourage them to drink water. This may help reduce many temper tantrums cause by dehydration.

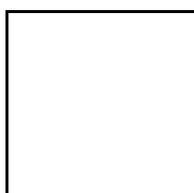
There are also children that may be more sensitive to textures, odors and tastes for which is important to teach them to use their words, and not see them only as "picky or rude" but as a difficulty they have as part of the sensory processing disorder. This may be seen also as their refusal to wear certain kind of shoes, fabrics or how tight they feel or even if they break crayons accidentally. Many of their reactions are a defense mechanism to their sensory processing disorder not an intentional bad behavior.

Promoting *good rest*, taking in consideration routines as we saw previously, at bedtime to help them adapt and facilitate rest. A good sleep allows for a better emotional regulation during the day, disposition to learn as well as it promotes their growth.

## **Structure and boundaries allow freedom to grow, connect and heal.**

*Physical activity and exercise* every two hours like jumping jacks, for a couple of minutes between activities during the day and a prolonged time of exercise during the day allows for their energy to be used and their mind to keep focused. Activities likes swimming, running, riding their bikes, jumping on a trampoline, dancing and others. Encourage them to do activities outdoors when possible.

*Deep breathing exercises* also allow for a good ventilation and flux of oxygen in their bodies. Like the "breathing box" which is basically making a box with your finger in the air and inhaling, holding and exhaling. You inhale while you 'draw' the upper line, you hold your breath while you go down, you exhale while you draw the lower line and pause when you go up again, and repeat.



The principles that empower your child, set the foundation for their well functioning mentally, emotionally and with time will improve connection and correction.

Furthermore, this techniques or strategies will teach us and our children to pay more attention to our body's needs. We were made to live in this temporary tents that we must take good care of. This strategies imply that we, as adults, recognize and organize better our time, activities and daily routines including our nutrition.

Let's remember that discipline comes from disciple, which means to follow, to teach others mainly with our example.

All of this takes patience, insight, and a *long-term view* on the solution, which is a healing process, not behavior modification. And yes, progress will happen within the midst of setbacks.

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### **Our prayer for your family this week,**

is that God gives you wisdom and help you recognize those areas that need to be restructured and organized. May you be able to experience His freedom from the stress and burdens of the last week and may you experience His peace as you continue running this race and trusting His guidance. Remember you can cast your cares on Him because He cares for you.

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