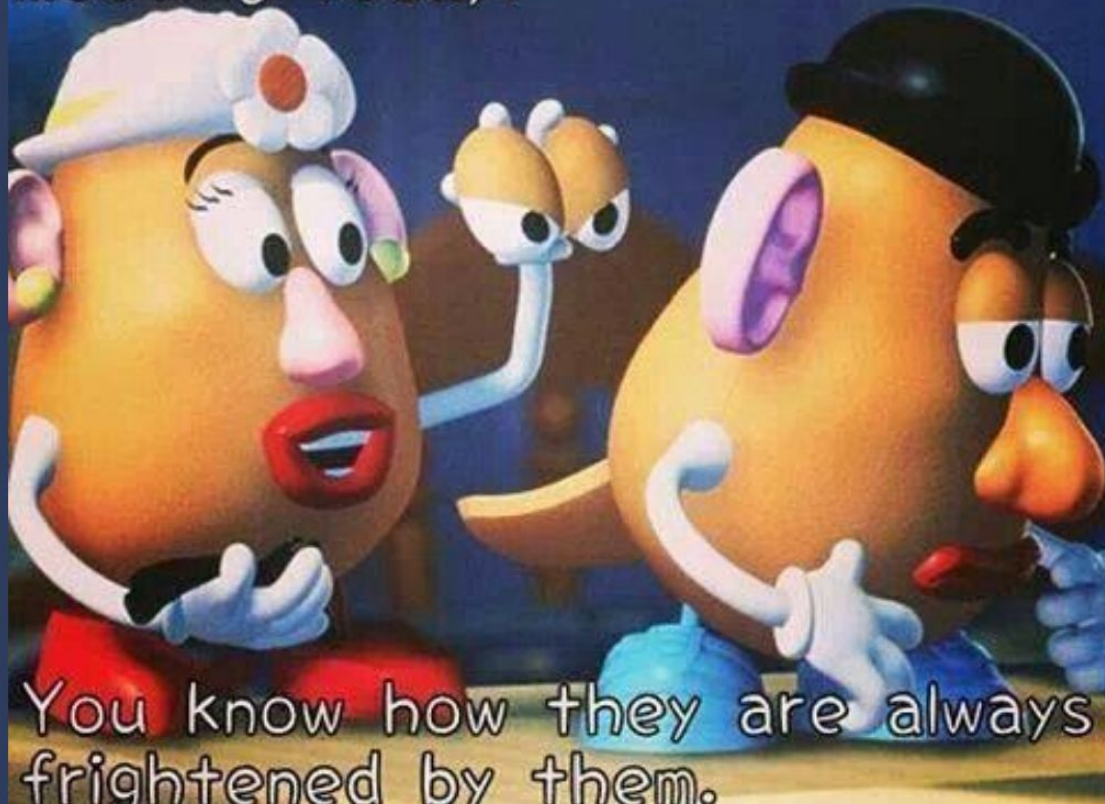


From Friction to Function: Building Partnerships with Vocal Parents

Moore Learning Conference
August 13th, 2026

Honey, don't forget your angry eyes we have the IEP meeting today.



You know how they are always frightened by them.

Types of Difficult Parents

The Uninvolved

Avoids conflict, emotion, and deep engagement.

Takes a backseat role, leaving discipline and emotional processing to others.



The Helicopter Parent

Excessively hover, micromanage, and intervene in their children's lives out of a desire to protect them from failure or discomfort.

Like to compare their child to others students.

Has a hard time letting her child take responsibility for his actions.



“My Kid is an Angel”

Refuses to see fault.

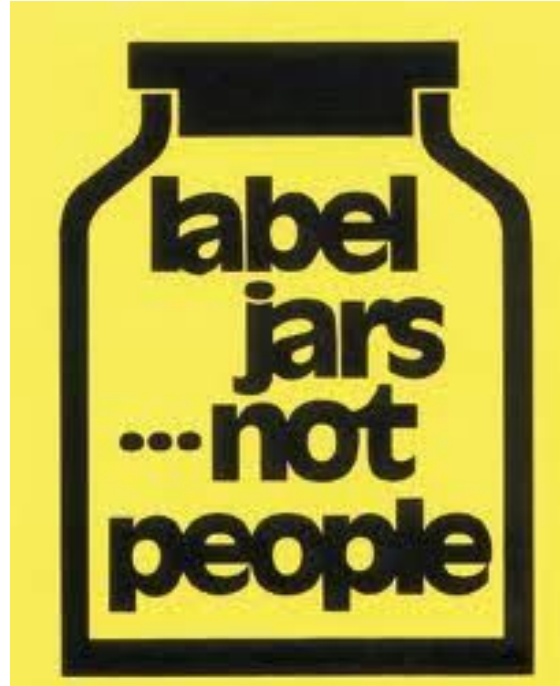
Mindset typically stems from parental ego-defense, where a child's misbehavior is subconsciously viewed as a direct reflection of the parent's own worth.





Downfalls of Categorizing/Labeling

- Create 'out' groups that dehumanize others (Pits “us” against “them”)
- Assume classifications/labels are permanent
- Behave as if a label describes everything about someone



Step Back & Gain Perspective before conversing

GET CURIOUS:

- Could this be about something else?
- What emotions could be underlying?

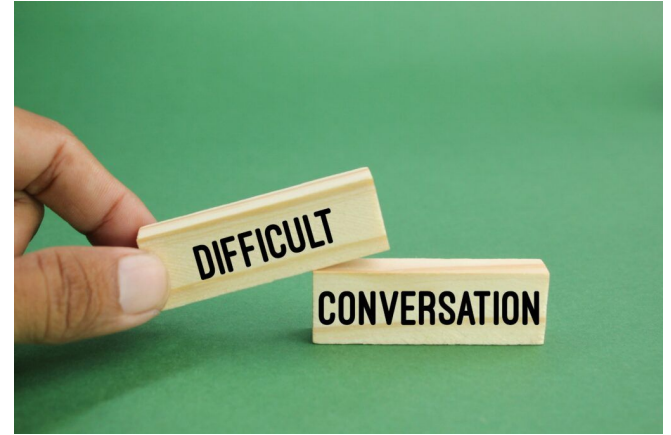


What is a Difficult Conversation?

- Ending a relationship
- Talking to a coworker who behaves offensively or makes suggestive comments
- Asking for more money/more support
- Asking a friend to repay a loan
- Asking in-laws to quit interfering
- Giving the boss feedback about her behavior
- Giving an unfavorable performance review
- Talking to a parent about concerns about their child
- Denying a student's parents a request

Three Ways of Handling Conversations

1. Avoid them
2. Face them and handle them poorly
3. Face them and handle them well



Why Conversations go Wrong

1. *Biology* – high adrenaline causes a fight or flight response.

2. *Surprise* – they arise without warning and require us to improvise without time to rehearse.

3. *Self-defeating behavior* – we do or say something that makes it worse.

Something went wrong

Try again

Try again

Clarify What You Really Want

I want to be treated fairly

What I want is for my administrator to spread extra work equitably among the staff.

I want to notify the parent's of student's behavior

What I want is for the parent to begin following through at home.

I want to feel special

I want my partner to spend more quality time with me

Think About Their Wants and Interests

- What might the other party want in this discussion?
- What are the interests (desires, fears, motivations) that are driving these wants?

When to NOT have the difficult conversation!

Do not engage in
Important conversations
when you are:

Hungry, not Hydrated, Hurting

Angry, Annoyed, Alienated

Lacking control over your
emotions, Liquored up,
Lonely

Testy, Tired, Tempted to
retaliate



Create Safety

People feel safe when they:

- Believe the other person has their best interests at heart (motives)
- People feel unsafe because of the **conditions**, not content, of a conversation



When Parents get ANGRY!

Because they will....

Six A's: Address Anger

Stop anger if it is not constructive and has become destructive.

- “What you are saying is obviously very important and I really want to fully understand your thoughts.”
(What is important to you is important to me.)
- “It is difficult for me to truly understand because of the (loudness of your voice, aggressive tone, angry accusations).”
- “Do you feel comfortable having this discussion in about 15 minutes?”

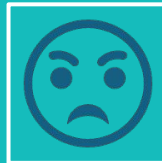


Eight A's: Ask Questions

Do say, “How are you feeling about this meeting/ conversation/this topic?”

Do say, “Tell me what specifically is causing you to be angry right now?”

Do say, “What needs to change in order for you to move forward?” “What would success look like for you?”



Do not say,
“Why are you
so angry?”



Do not say,
“ I know how
you feel.”

Eight A's: Acknowledge Their Points

- “I see your point.”
- “If I were in your shoes...”
- “I can see how you might feel that way.”



ACKNOWLEDGE

Eight A's: Acknowledge/Agree

DO:

Identify what you already agree with

Seek out things you can agree with

Create opportunities for agreement without concessions

AVOID:
Being insincere

Eight A's: Avoid Provoking

DO:

- Make “I statements”
- Be optimistic

AVOID:

- Making assumptions, judgements, characterizations
- Trying to invalidate/negotiate away their feelings
- Answering emotions with raw data
- Refusing to talk until they “get it together”

Eight A's: Apologize

Apologize when appropriate

a statement that sincerely expresses your sorrow at your role in causing (or at least not preventing) pain or difficult to others.



When Schools and Families Do Not Agree

- Productive, shared decision-making among families and school team members is an important factor in ensuring a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for each child with a disability.
- Relationships and trust are the core of family-school partnership; differences in perspective and opinion among parents and professionals, within and beyond the evaluation and IEP process, are expected and valuable when productively managed.

Activity: Reflection

- Write down three techniques you will practice over the next Quarter
- Give Something, Get Something



Prior Written Notice

Federal and state laws and regulations* require that schools provide the parents of a child with a disability a full explanation of their rights in the special education process.



Facilitated IEP meetings

A Facilitated IEP/504 (FIEP) meeting is a voluntary service, offered at no cost to families and schools. It is not required by the IDEA, but can be used to resolve disagreement and support IEP/504 teams in developing an IEP/504 for a student with a disability. In an FIEP meeting, an impartial facilitator guides the IEP/504 team through the meeting process. The facilitator does not make decisions, but rather supports effective communication and collaborative decision-making among the team.

Facilitated IEP Meeting

Who & How to Request

Who can request a Facilitated IEP/504 meeting?

Parents/guardians, adult students, and school district personnel with the approval of their Special Education Director may request a facilitated IEP/504 meeting.

How can a Facilitated IEP/504 meeting be requested?

Requests for a Facilitated IEP/504 meeting can be made by contacting the EC office who will then arrange with DPI.

Fb/spinningcarsautismadventure

I'm all
prepared
for the
IEP
meeting!



Cover me!
I'm going in!