

PARENTING ON CUE

with **Queenie Tan**



Poc 139: To correct them or not?

Hi. Welcome back to the Parenting on Cue Podcast. So today, I am going to answer a question from a parent, where she reached out to me in one of my study groups. And she said that her child was struggling with something. I think it's about letter reversal or handwriting, or maybe using past tense or present tense incorrectly, or something like that. And she asked me if she should correct them or just leave it because it tends to correct itself. So I gave her an advice which I thought is what we all need to learn about here. I'm hoping that this advice will change your perspective about this.

It's not so much a strategy thing, but it's more about perspective. I think a lot of us get hung up with the concept of correcting someone or correcting something. We get hung up on it. And we always think that when something is not right, we have to fix it, which is common, I know. But with young children, it's kind of tricky to try and fix it. Because usually when you try, and a lot of times, when people say that I need to correct my children, it normally means... It implies some kind of harsh, not so fun process.

But I think if we can just replace the concept of correct or correcting, if we can replace that concept with a different term, maybe model the preferred behavior, then yes do it. So the question instead of "should I correct them" You can say "should I model the preferred behavior." Then yes, go ahead. So when it comes to modeling, it's a lot more spontaneous. For young children, if we say correct them, and say no "this is wrong, we need to do it this way." That's kind of harsh because it teaches them that there's a wrong and the right way to do it. And if we keep doing that, after a while, they're so afraid to try because they're so afraid to make mistakes because there's a wrong and a right way. But if we can model the preferred behavior or whatever it is that they prefer, then it would be so much more natural for them.

So for example, if your child was writing letters reversed. A lot of parents freak out when they do that because parents think that letter reversal is dyslexia, when it's actually not. That is a huge misconception. And I think a lot of dyslexics, it's a pet peeve for us when people ask us if we write letters backwards. It's not always the case. That's the least of our problems, frankly speaking. So

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if your children are writing letters backwards, then you can always just model writing it the right way. So you can say "oh look, I like the way you spell birds but let me write it for you so you can see how mommy writes it, and how you write it and to see if there's a difference." And then if the child is okay with it, you can write the word next to their word, and then ask them if they can see a difference. So of course, if they're reversing the b and the d's, and if you put two side by side, they can see that "oh one is a bit different than the other." You may not have to point it out, you can make it less obvious. You can write it on a separate sheet, the whole sentence, and then get them to look at it, and compare it, or put it together or something like that. And if you keep on doing it, then they will be more aware of print. And that's what we call print awareness, and how certain print needs to present itself so that in a sentence or in a word, it makes sense. That's just for writing. If let's say, your child is having difficulty with past and present tense, this is something that I struggle with because I'm learning Spanish. And past and present tense is so hard in Spanish. So if they're struggling with past or present tense or sentence structure, and they say something that isn't grammatically correct, you can always model the proper sentence structure. You can do that, and you can repeat after them, and model the proper sentence structure, you can do that, and repeat after them, and let them hear it. You may not have to make a big deal out of it. I get this a lot because I have a lot of bilingual students in my class. I've always worked in international settings where we have multi-national scene. And if a child comes to me and says something like "Teacher, I got a doll to school. And I would say "oh you brought a doll to school, can I see it. I can't imagine that you brought a doll, yesterday you brought a soft toy, so let's see what you have." So I've just casually repeated the word brought. So you can do that. You can just model what it's supposed to be or what you want it to be, and find ways to repeat it. You don't need to sound like a broken record player, but you can find ways to repeat it a couple of times so that they can hear it and figure out "that what's supposed to sound like."

So I think the whole concept here is it needs to be fine-tuned a little bit because when people say that they need to correct something, it always comes with a very negative connotation. But if you can just think of correcting as just modeling what you want to see then that would be brilliant.

So that is what I have to say today about whether we should correct our children or not. But I I'm hoping that with this episode, it will get you thinking about how you can approach this the next time you see something that needs to be find you okay. So thanks a lot for listening. And until next week. Remember happy and confident parents have happy and confident children.