

Process of Discovery: Why Your Child is Struggling

During this process of discovery, parents must appreciate their critical role. Time is precious, and society allows these children less and less of it. And while this parental responsibility is overwhelming at times, parents should also feel empowered by their love. Here are some strategies that may help during this process of discovery:

Talk about your feelings, even ones that society may not approve of, such as anger, embarrassment, and exhaustion. Select someone—a spouse, a friend, a clergyman, a sister, and a brother—who will listen without passing judgment. The Internet has become a place for people to connect. While care should be given in disclosing personal information, just reading the posts of others can be very reassuring. It can decrease the feeling that you are alone.

Acknowledge that parenting this child can be very challenging at times. The drain on finances, time, and energy can overwhelm us. The minority status that we feel as parents of struggling children doesn't provide ready support. The focus is on helping the child, not how the parent is doing. By acknowledging that what you are doing is hard, you may feel a relief or a sense of acceptance of your own feelings.

Educate yourself as best you can about the behaviors you're seeing in your child. Finding information isn't easy, especially when you aren't sure what is going on with your child, and specialized professionals may be difficult to find. Again the Internet can be a great resource, when used with care and good judgment. Use it like a reporter who verifies his information with more than one source. But parents can't be knowledgeable in all the areas that affect their child and certainly, not to the degree of a professional. But they can ask efficient questions. For example, when a label or diagnosis is presented, the parent should feel free to ask: What behaviors, signs, and symptoms does my child have that support this label? And just as importantly: What signs, symptoms, and behaviors DO NOT fit this label?

Celebrate your child's gifts. Is your child hard working? Sensitive and empathetic? Are they kind or tenacious? Every child has special qualities, gifts that can be used to help the child adapt to his or her world.

Feel hope, if you can. Things will get better. There are terrific tools available today and with the proper guidance these tools can make incredible differences in your child. The combination of hope, finding skilled and caring professionals, and trusting your own knowledge of your child's world can make a real difference.

Never give up. So it is with the process of discovery, it is essential that we never give up until we have found the answers to our questions. In the final analysis, our child's quality of life depends upon these answers.

2002 - Karen J. Foli *Mother's Journey Through Auditory Processing Disorder; From ldonling.org*



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