

# solutions

## A HOLIDAY GIFT

You succeeded in transitioning from summer to the new school year, and now the challenges of the upcoming holiday season are fast-approaching. Traditionally, this time of year is demanding of parents' time and energy. For mom, there are a multitude of holiday chores. For dad, longer hours may be spent at work to meet the holiday expenses. And for children, getting their parents' attention amidst these competing priorities often translates into problem behavior. This year, we encourage you to begin a new family tradition: **Catch your kids being good.**

Effective School Solutions would like to share some tips that can improve parent-child relationships during the holidays and for years to come! The common instinct is attempting to "solve" a problem with focused attention, time, energy and resources. But with challenging children, the typical result is that the unwanted behavior grows into a bigger problem – it happens more often, or more intensely, or both. The right intention backfires and produces the exact opposite of what was expected and desired. There is a shorter, more effective route to extinguish unwanted behaviors and boost the child's self-image at the same time. It is the Nurtured Heart Approach™ created by Howard Glasser, and it's a 180-degree turn about from the conventional model.

We would like to introduce you to the "Nurtured Heart Approach," it is a philosophy and technique that turns conventional parenting wisdom upside down: it focuses on energizing success and de-energizing failure. Research has shown that parents who provide an intense level of connection and emotion in a proactive manner (when the child is behaving well), bring out the best in themselves and their child:

### STEP ONE:

Pay attention and put lots of emotion into seeing and saying everything that the child is doing right, everything that supports who your child is at his or her best and the qualities that you want to grow through your focused intention and energizing. The parent recognizes and appreciates every ounce of effort the child puts forth in keeping the rules, because there is always some level of effort involved; and when a challenging or intense personality is involved, it is usually a huge amount of effort being expended at any given moment to follow the rules, and this effort is rarely ever recognized or appreciated by parents or teachers. Consider the amount of reaction, energy and emotion that under conventional parenting the child might receive for breaking a rule, such as being disrespectful, and one sees that children can easily form an impression that they get more intense relationship when things are going wrong. That is the message Nurtured Heart proponents want to reverse for challenging children. They want the parent to clearly, thoroughly and continually demonstrate that children get the best from them when they simply do what's expected and follow the rules.

### STEP TWO

Recognize and appreciate every moment the unwanted behavior is not happening or happening less. Our thoughts, intentions and judgments about the child are programming our brains to be on high alert to look out for only the problem behaviors; and we really do not see anything that our child is doing right. The child who loses his temper and break things stops at some point. "I appreciate that you're not breaking anything right now. I know you're still mad, and that shows me that you are using a lot of self-control right now to stop yourself."

### STEP THREE

De-energize the unwanted behavior. Relationship takes the form of attention, interaction and reaction, so the parent does none of that when the unwanted behavior appears. If the behavior is a broken rule, the parent says a simple, "Reset," and moves immediately to back to Step No. 1 by saying as soon as the child stops swearing: "I appreciate that you're not swearing right now." Important aspects of de-energizing negativity are that parents do not lecture or provide pep talks at a child's point of failure. Smarter is the parent who provides an intense level of connection, emotion and relationship in a proactive and preventive manner when the child is behaving well.

In summary, take the following "Three Stands" when you begin to implement the Nurtured Heart Approach:

**STAND 1. "ABSOLUTELY YES!"** I will constantly recognize the achievement and success that my child displays no matter how small.

**STAND 2. ABSOLUTELY NO!** I refuse to give my time, energy and relationship to negative behavior. I will not accidentally foster failure, nor will I reward problems by responding to them intensely.

**STAND 3. ABSOLUTE CLARITY!** I will have clear and consistent consequences for my child when a rule has been broken.

*Effective School Solutions wishes you success as you begin your journey toward a peaceful, healthy holiday.*

*For more information and support with implementing the Nurtured Heart Approach, please consult with your Effective School Solutions' therapists and refer to the following:*

### References:

- Transforming the Difficult Child: The Nurtured Heart Approach*, by Howard Glasser and Jennifer Easley (Nurtured Heart Publications, rev. 2008).
- Transforming the Difficult Child Workbook: An Interactive Guide to The Nurtured Heart Approach*, published in 2007 with co-authors Joann Bowdidge and Lisa Bravo.
- Raising Your Spirited Child: A Guide for Parents Whose Child is More Intense, Sensitive, Perceptive, Persistent, and Energetic*, by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka (William Morrow, rev. 2006)

### Websites:

[www.EnergyParenting.com](http://www.EnergyParenting.com)

For more information on the Nurtured Heart Approach® you can visit their website at <http://www.childrensuccessfoundation.com>

**PARENTS MATTER:** *The greatest gift you can give your children is your relationship with them.*