



**childdevelopmentpartners**

*Support for Kids and Families Living with ADHD, Autism and Executive Dysfunction*

## **Stop the Nag Cycle: How to Raise Intrinsically Motivated Kids**

**A Next Action Worksheet for use with the tele-seminar.**

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This worksheet is intended to briefly summarize the main concepts of in our online seminar: *Stop the Nag Cycle: How to Raise Intrinsically Motivated Kids* and follows the flow of the presentation in the matching online seminar. We have included a many practical suggestions to help you think through the concepts as they relate to your family life.

If you have not already accessed the online tele-seminar, please click on this link, enter your email and listen at your convenience:

<http://childdevelopmentpartners.com/parenting-class-library/>

## What is the Nag Cycle?

Sometimes it can feel like our children aren't motivated to do much of anything. And we parents get swept into what we call, **The Nag Cycle**. We ask our kids nicely, raise our voices, threaten consequences and then there's a meltdown (sometimes our child, sometimes us, often everyone). Maybe the chore gets done, maybe not, but we're all so exhausted we give up only to ramp up **The Nag Cycle** another day.

## Four steps to Move beyond The Nag Cycle

### 1) Tap into your child's internal motivators to get chores done without a fight

**Figure out what your child really likes to do and support that as a way to contribute to the household.** Sometimes it will be very obvious and sometimes it will take a little creative digging.

**Let them do the preferred chore imperfectly.** Let them do it how they do it. At least at first. Let go of perfection.

**Praise them.** More on this below. But our praise mantra is: **Be specific, genuine and authentic.**

Remember, even beyond the value of the chore in the short-term is the long-term value of idea that everyone contributes and helps out in a family.

**Let go of other chores that are more of a struggle (for now).** I am doing this with my son's room. Of course we will need to clean it up. But it is unlikely that he will do that on his own. At least temporarily I will make the things that are hard **let's do it together chores**. This is especially important for children with executive functioning issues. They need to learn how to clean their rooms. It does not actually come naturally. They can only learn if you do it together.

### 2) Ways to turn nagging into constructive conversation

Slow down the process. Breathe, take a break

Clearly define the problem with your child, "I'm asking for X, you are doing Y..."

Partner on brainstorming a compromise/solution, "How do we resolve where we are stuck?"

If child resists problem solving, give them choices, "You have to do X, there isn't a choice here. If we can't work together I'll have to give a consequence, but if we come up with a plan, you may get what you want, too."

Be consistent with follow through regardless of child's decision to cooperate or not.

### 3) How to use praise appropriately and for the development of long term personal motivation.

All kids need praise, this is especially true for quirky kids who may not always get positive feedback.

Praise should always be **specific, genuine and authentic**.

We, as parents need to focus on **effort and willingness to help and work hard rather than results**. At least in the beginning.

Remember we are trying to change the conversation and let go to the power struggle.

Don't say something is great if it isn't but find what is going well with it. Remember children want to please us. They want to do well. They want to contribute.

### 4) Reward vs consequence/punishment and when each approach is appropriate

Take time to define expected behaviors and things that are more challenging. These are different for every child.

Expected behaviors don't get a reward.

Behaviors that are challenging might receive a reward. For example, if your child has a hard time sitting down for an entire meal, if they can sit for 10 min and eat, maybe they can get an extra few minutes of screen time or stay up an extra 10 min before bedtime, etc.

#### Consequences are appropriate in two main situations:

##### **1. When a child does something that is clearly inappropriate: hitting hard, biting, spitting at someone, swearing, throwing thing aimed to hurt others, lying etc.**

We are of the mind that every child, regardless of disability must have appropriate consequences for such behaviors. Otherwise, they will never learn to contain these impulses.

The consequence depends on the child. In almost every case, part of the follow up should be an apology (spoken or written) to the person they were aggressive toward.

It's also a good idea to ask your child to explain how their behavior made the other person feel. This is called "theory of mind" and for some kids it's very challenging, which is fine. This is a learning opportunity and not just punishment for punishment's sake.

## **2. Consequence is also appropriate for repetitive ignoring or defying expectations, rules or agreements.**

For example: You and your child agree she will clean her room 1x/week to be done by 5pm on Sundays. Missing the deadline once isn't a big deal. However, continually missing the deadline requires a mild consequence. Maybe it's staying in her room til it's clean or missing a preferred event with friends until it is clean. It's ok to do some problem solving as we discussed earlier..asking her to partner with you in solving this impasse.

And sometimes it's hard to tell if a child is engaging in a power struggle or is not really capable of the request. So this isn't an exact science. But tweens and teens do push limits and are waiting to see what you will do about it.

**If you give a consequence and your child gets with the program, you are on the right track. If the consequence results in no change, it's time to address the issues more deeply with your child.**

*We hope you find this helpful.*

*If you are struggling with stopping the Nag Cycle please do not hesitate to reach out for help. For a free phone consultation contact us via phone*

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*or email our assistant: [Heidi@ChildDevelopmentPartners.com](mailto:Heidi@ChildDevelopmentPartners.com)*