



fit-ology fast track_(sm):

“The Explosive Child: A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children,” by Ross Greene, Ph.D.

overview

“The Explosive Child” is really a misnomer - the collaborative problem solving (“CPS”) strategies can work for *anyone* and are a great way to build a trusting, responsive relationship with your children and even other adults. This book offers a model CPS strategy, and also solutions for when things go a little off-track. Fair warning: once you really tap into the basic premise that people do well when they can, you’ll be frustrated forever by people who think that kids lack motivation (when it’s really skills they need). These strategies will take some time to learn and some time to use — but they’ll save even more time in the long run, in addition to saving tons of heartache.

relevant to

ADHD, ODD, SPD, GAD; frequent “meltdowns,” irritability, quick frustration, impulsivity, explosive emotion; parenting; relationship-building within the family and with friends.

404-388-5487 www.FIT-ology.com

For use, reuse, reprint and sharing with express permission only; all rights reserved by fit-ology, Fusion Fitness LLC, Jessica Covington 2019.





good for

parents, teachers, sports coaches, relatives/caregivers,
executive function coaches.

summary: 258 pages summarized in 6

Basic premise: people do well when they can; if they're not doing well, there's likely a missing skill: flexibility, adaptability, frustration tolerance [emotional self-regulation, a part of executive function], or problem solving.

[Keep in mind that behavior is communication. Your child's behavior is trying to tell you something.]

Missing skills (called "lagging skills" in the book) can masquerade as intentional behavior issues: wanting her own way, manipulating others, being lazy, making bad choices, having a bad attitude.

We need to look for unsolved problems resulting from missing skills, and the kids need to be part of that search.

Ground rules for finding the missing skills:

- Begin with saying, "I've noticed..." or "I've noticed some difficulty with..." and note the **task** that's difficult. Very important: remove any talk of behavior.
- Note ONE problem at a time - no clumping. For example, "difficulty with homework" could include math, science, English or a multitude

404-388-5487 www.FIT-ology.com

For use, reuse, reprint and sharing with express permission only; all rights reserved by fit-ology, Fusion Fitness LLC, Jessica Covington 2019.





of other things. Better to say, “I’ve noticed some difficulty switching from snack time to reading for Language Arts.”

- Keep your theories out of it. Hint: if you find yourself wanting to say “because...”, you’re probably about to state your theory.
- Also, keep your solutions out of it for now — you need time to collaborate first.
- Ask, “what’s up?” or a similar phrase that solicits information and feels comfortable for you because *the key to this system is getting your child involved*.

Conventional theories of reward and punishment don’t work because what you’re seeing isn’t rooted in intentional behavior. What’s happening is rooted in lagging skills, and must be addressed differently. This is a tough shift for many parents, especially after years of teachers and others telling you that your child is “making bad choices” and the like. Chances are, your also child knows there are problems that make him feel bad, but doesn’t know how to solve them. If reward charts, behavior charts, negative consequences, etc have not worked for you in the long term, this is a good clue that your child is missing skills, not the will to do well. This is the essence of what the book calls “lens change”: if reward/punishment systems haven’t worked yet, the child lacks skill — not motivation. CPS is problem-solving, not behavioral modification.

The three types of plans:

- Plan A: unilateral decision-making by the adult

404-388-5487 www.FIT-ology.com

For use, reuse, reprint and sharing with express permission only; all rights reserved by fit-ology, Fusion Fitness LLC, Jessica Covington 2019.





- **Plan B: collaborative problem solving** (what the book is all about!)
- Plan C: setting a problem aside for now, to attend other and higher priorities

Steps in using Plan B

- Empathy: gathering information in order to understand
- Define the problem: communicate your concern about the same problem
- Invite: invite your child to participate in the problem solving process; discuss and agree on **realistic** and **mutually satisfactory** possible solutions
- Note that Plan B is **not** usually an in-the-moment plan; it should be proactive, not reactive.

Executing Plan B

First, use the framework to present the issue (called ALSUP, for Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems): “I’ve noticed some difficulty with _____. What’s up?”

- If she says *something*, move on to drilling (not grilling) — gently seeking empathy, understanding, clarity.
 - This step is hard because adults often think we already know the answers.
 - Use reflective listening, and ask “who, what, where, when” questions. Ask why the difficulty happens sometimes but not others. Ask what thoughts she has when the ALSUP is happening.

404-388-5487 www.FIT-ology.com

For use, reuse, reprint and sharing with express permission only; all rights reserved by fit-ology, Fusion Fitness LLC, Jessica Covington 2019.





- Break the ALSUP even smaller if needed.
- Keep asking for more information (“What else...?”) until there isn’t any more.
- If he says *nothing* or “*I don’t know*”
 - Do NOT answer with your own ideas.
 - Offer “I’m not sure we’ve talked about it this way before... take your time...there’s no rush.”
 - Revisit later.
- If she says, “I don’t care...I don’t have a problem with it.”
 - Use reflective listening to see if you can open a conversation.
 - Revisit later.
- If he says, “I don’t want to talk now” or “I don’t have to tell you”
 - Don’t push. Acknowledge that either statement is true, and (if appropriate) you can come back to it later.
 - [You might try saying things like, “If a later time feels better to you, I’d really like to hear your thoughts.” “I sense that this difficulty feels tough for you too, and I’d like to help — even though I may have bossed you in the past, I’d like to try a new way of listening/helping.”]

Second, define the problem.

- This is where you offer your concern (“My concern is that...”)
- Resist the temptation to throw a solution in with your concern (do NOT say, “My concern is that if you don’t do your homework before soccer, it doesn’t get done, so you’ll just have to do it before the game.”)

404-388-5487 www.FIT-ology.com

For use, reuse, reprint and sharing with express permission only; all rights reserved by fit-ology, Fusion Fitness LLC, Jessica Covington 2019.





Third, invite your child to the problem-solving process.

- Set the stage for working together (“Let’s think about...” or “I wonder how we could...”).
- Then give him the first chance by saying, “Do you have some ideas?”
- See if ideas are realistic and mutually satisfactory (hint: either person suggesting “trying harder” isn’t realistic — she is already trying because we know kids do well when they can).
- If he suggests kid-centric ideas without considering your concern, that’s natural. Try “Hmm...that’s an idea. I’m not sure if it addresses my concern,” and allow a chance to respond. “Let’s see if we can find a solution for both our concerns.”

Finally, when you settle on a possible solution, [offer thanks for participating with an open mind] and remind her that if this first try doesn’t work, you can try something different. [“We’re on the same team, and we’ll keep trying until we find something that works all around.”]

The book wraps with a chapter each on common troubles and questions, both worth reading. They also address ways to bring up CPS with teachers and other important adults in your child’s life.

404-388-5487 www.FIT-ology.com

For use, reuse, reprint and sharing with express permission only; all rights reserved by fit-ology, Fusion Fitness LLC, Jessica Covington 2019.





general notes applicable to all fit-ology fast tracks^(sm)

- * as a middle-ground way to abbreviate pronouns, I alternate “she” and “he”
- * coach’s comments are noted in [brackets] - points noted as such aren’t necessarily contained in the book, but are related and included as professional opinion

404-388-5487 www.FIT-ology.com

For use, reuse, reprint and sharing with express permission only; all rights reserved by fit-ology, Fusion Fitness LLC, Jessica Covington 2019.

