



WELCOME TO *THE HEALTHY BUZZ*

Advocates for Healthy Kids is here to cut through the noise and bring parents the practical, balanced information they need to raise strong, healthy families. From real-life nutrition tips to clear breakdowns of hot-button health topics, this newsletter delivers resources, ideas, and encouragement — so you can stay confident in the most important role you'll ever have: **being your child's greatest advocate.**

A NOTE FROM DR. DUNNAVANT



Dear Friends,

I've been thinking a lot this week about the difference between reacting and responding.

As a mom, I know what it feels like when your child melts down in the grocery store, refuses to get ready for school, or pushes back on a boundary you've set for the hundredth time. In those moments, it's so easy to match their energy, to raise your voice, to wonder if you're doing any of this right.

*But here's what I've learned, both as a physician and as a parent: **our kids aren't just watching what we say. They're watching how we handle it.***

*When we pause before we respond, when we name our own frustration out loud, when we model problem-solving instead of perfection, we're teaching them something no app, no curriculum, and no expert can replicate. **We're teaching them how to be human.***

This week's research on positive parenting reminded me of something I wish I'd known earlier: emotion coaching isn't about having it all together. It's about being present enough to notice, brave enough to name it, and consistent enough to guide your child through it — even when you're still figuring it out yourself.

You don't need a perfect script. You don't need to get it right every time. You just need to keep showing up with warmth, boundaries, and the belief that your voice matters more than any algorithm, any headline, or any outside pressure.

Because it does.

Your kids are learning resilience from you — in the car ride home, at the dinner table, in the two minutes before bed when you help them name what went wrong and what they're proud of. Those moments aren't small. They're everything.

Trust yourself. You're teaching more than you think.

Warmly,

Dr. Siobhan Dunnavant, MD

Senior Advisor, Advocates for Healthy Kids

FACT OR MYTH?

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Positive parenting means **staying upbeat** and **never** showing frustration.

Keep up the conversation!

Follow us [@adv4healthykids](https://www.instagram.com/adv4healthykids) for useful tips, clear breakdowns on hot-button issues, and encouragement to stay empowered and confident in your role as a key part of your child's growth.

ADVOCACY
ACTION



Family Check-In

How was your day?

One high, one low, one thing you learned.



The "High, Low, Learned" Family Check-In

A simple dinnertime (or car ride) ritual where everyone shares three things: one high from the day, one low, and one thing they learned.

Why it works:

Research shows that consistent family routines and open conversations support emotional regulation and resilience. This activity lets kids practice naming feelings, celebrating wins, and reframing challenges. Which are all key components of emotion coaching.

How to do it:

- Pick one anchor time: dinner, bedtime, or the drive home from school.
- Go around the table (or the car). Parents go first to model vulnerability and honesty.
- Keep it short and judgment-free. Some days the "low" might be big; other days it's just "I was hungry at 3pm." That's okay.
- End on the "learned," it shifts the brain toward growth and problem-solving.

Bonus tip:

If your child says "I don't know," offer a choice: "Was your high at recess or at lunch?" Narrowing it down makes it easier to engage.

THE LATEST

The Power of Positive Parenting

Let's be honest. Some days, between juggling carpool, homework, and meltdowns, positivity feels out of reach. That's okay. Positivity isn't pretending everything's fine. It's regulating your emotions, modeling them for your child, and teaching your child's brain how to handle big feelings, solve problems, and bounce back.

The Science That Backs It Up

A [study](#) published in 2025 helps explain how emotion socialization is a dynamic transactional process that unfolds during parent-child interactions. Researchers watched hundreds of moms

and preschoolers tackle an Etch-a-Sketch task together. When moms “coached” emotions (accepting feelings, naming them, and guiding problem solving) children were more likely to regulate themselves in the very next moments. At age 3, there was a two-way “virtuous cycle”: moms’ coaching of positive emotions (like pride or excitement) predicted kids’ cooperation, and kids’ cooperation prompted more positive coaching from moms. By age 4, positive coaching led to more cooperation and engagement from children.

Why Positivity Matters

- **Emotions are teachable.** Back-and-forth (“[serve and return](#)”) conversations wire language, memory, and stress-regulation systems that support resilience across life. Even short, daily exchanges count.
- **Warm, supportive relationships build resiliency.** Through [parental modeling](#) of optimism and positive emotions, children are more resilient and able to cope with uncertainty, conflict, and failure.
- **Positivity builds cells, not just “good moods.”** Positive emotions (celebrating small wins, noticing joy) and people with a more optimistic outlook have [lower risks](#) of developing chronic diseases, thanks to healthier cellular activity.

What This Looks Like In Real Life

- **Notice and name:** “Your shoulders are tight — I know that was frustrating!” Naming feelings lowers intensity and signals safety.
- **Validate before fixing:** “That makes sense.” Then: “Want ideas, or do you want me to just listen?”
- **Coach the next step:** “Let’s try this first, and then we can move to the next part.” Concrete plans reduce overwhelm.
- **Celebrate positive sparks:** “You kept trying even when it didn’t work at first — that’s perseverance.” Positive emotion coaching strengthens motivation and engagement.

Simple Habits to Model Positivity

- **One “high/low/learned” at dinner or in the car.** Consistent family routines and open conversations are linked with healthier behaviors and emotional well-being.
- **Micro-moments of praise:** Catch effort (“You organized your backpack without me having to ask — good job!”) more than outcome.
- **Move and reset:** Five minutes of movement can downshift stress and open the door to better problem-solving. “I’m frustrated too. Let’s shake it out for 3 minutes and try again.”

- **Model what you want to hear:** “That didn’t go how I planned, so I’m taking two breaths and trying again.”

Coaching Both “Hard” and “Happy”

Most of us focus on helping kids through anger, fear, or sadness, and that matters. Coaching negative emotions is linked with better regulation and adjustment over time. But don’t skip the good stuff: noticing pride, joy, curiosity, and relief builds your child’s capacity to engage, persist, and cooperate.

If you try and it still feels bumpy, you’re not doing it wrong, this is practice for both of you. Choose warmth over worry, and curiosity over correction. Name the feeling, validate it, and coach one doable next step. Those small, steady moments of positive guidance don’t just calm today’s storm — they build your child’s lifelong toolkit for handling the next one.

The Power of Positive Thinking

Your outlook doesn't just shape your mood—it shapes your cells. New research shows that optimism influences everything from stress chemistry to cellular repair. And kids? They learn it by watching you.

We shared simple, science-backed ways parents can model resilience and realistic optimism — even on hard days.

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Meta Instagram Trial

Meta's Instagram CEO testified in court — and what came out should matter to every parent. Internal documents revealed executives knew certain features could harm kids, but chose growth over safety. We broke it down on Instagram, including what you can do right now to protect your child's sleep, attention, and well-being.

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Looking for a place to start your research?

Check out our [Resources Page!](#) It's a great place to begin your journey in becoming a confident, educated advocate in your child's development.

[START YOUR RESEARCH](#)

HEALTHY REFRESH ON A WEEKNIGHT DINNER CLASSIC

PASTA WITH HIDDEN VEGGIES

Pasta is always a crowd-pleaser, and this version sneaks in extra veggies without the battle. Perfect for nights when you need something quick, satisfying, and nutritious enough that you can feel good serving it. A true weeknight win.



[DOWNLOAD TO SAVE THIS RECIPE FOR LATER](#)

ENGAGE WITH US

What's one way you've helped your child work through a big feeling this week? Whether it's naming the emotion, taking a reset break together, or just sitting with them while they calmed down — we'd love to hear what's working in your home.

[LET US KNOW HERE](#)

KEEP IN TOUCH

Follow Advocates for Healthy Kids for quick tips, fun updates, and real talk from fellow parents and our founder, Dr. Dunnavant. Get involved and help us keep our children safe and healthy!



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