Opportunity Mindset Tips
Transforming Challenges into Possibilities

“My child is acting out in school. I keep getting calls from the teacher that my child’s not engaged in school and is being disruptive.”

CHALLENGE
How can I get my child to behave appropriately and get engaged in school?

CHOICE
You can decide how to think about this moment and how to respond. You can choose to see this challenge as a chance for your child to learn and grow.

OPPORTUNITY
You can address both issues together. By helping them discover and share what they are interested in and passionate about and encouraging them to say what they need in positive ways, you can support them in building the life skill of Self-Directed, Engaged Learning.

SKILL-BUILDING STRATEGIES

1. TAKE YOUR CHILD’S VIEW
   TRY TO FIGURE OUT why your child isn’t engaged and is being disruptive. Is the material too difficult? Or is it actually too easy or not interesting? Are they trying to get a laugh from classmates? Or are they having trouble focusing? When you understand why your child is acting out, you will be better able to help them.

2. SHARE REASONS
   EXPLAIN YOUR POINT OF VIEW. Let your child know that you feel concerned when you get a call from school. Let them know that you are here to help them figure out what’s causing this behavior, and how they can get more connected to school. Tell them that you are glad the school called so you can be a problem-solving team together.

3. PROVIDE CHOICES
   SET LIMITS and give your child options within those limits. You can tell your child, “You were disrupting your class today, and that’s not okay. If something isn’t working for you at school, would you like to talk to the teacher OR have a plan for how you are going to manage those feelings?”

4. PROBLEM-SOLVE TOGETHER
   INVITE your child to choose an area they want to learn more about with you and tell them that getting involved in learning can also help them have less of a need to be disruptive. You can suggest topics, like dinosaurs, planets or cars. Think together about ways to discover more about this topic. Set a time to share what you both have learned, such as talking over mealtime. Try to make it a habit to share learnings during this time, and invite your child to share about things they have learned in school, too.

5. SCAFFOLD
   BUILD ON the progress your child makes. Try to notice when your child acts like a “learner.” Do they ask questions based on their curiosity or want to know more or go deeper? Do they show an interest in a particular topic? You can say, “Hey. These are great questions. Let’s talk about where you might find out more. That’s what I call being a learner!”

An Opportunity Mindset means choosing to see a challenge as a chance to learn and grow.

Self-Directed, Engaged Learning uses executive function skills. These are skills like reflecting on an experience or situation, setting goals and working toward them, and being flexible in how to learn something. When children ask questions and then seek answers, they are building the skill of Self-Directed, Engaged Learning. For more information visit: www.mindinthemaking.org