

Using the iPad as a Reward for My Neurodivergent Son

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BEFORE YOU READ:

1. What does neurodivergent mean? Share what you know.
2. Do you use rewards with your children? If so, describe.

Battles with My Son

“It’s time to go!” I yelled. My son wouldn’t budge.
“We are going!” I yelled again.

All my parenting skills went out the window. My son was refusing to do what I asked, and we were running late for an appointment in town. He wanted to stay home in his comfort zone. I wanted him to get in the car. It was a battle.

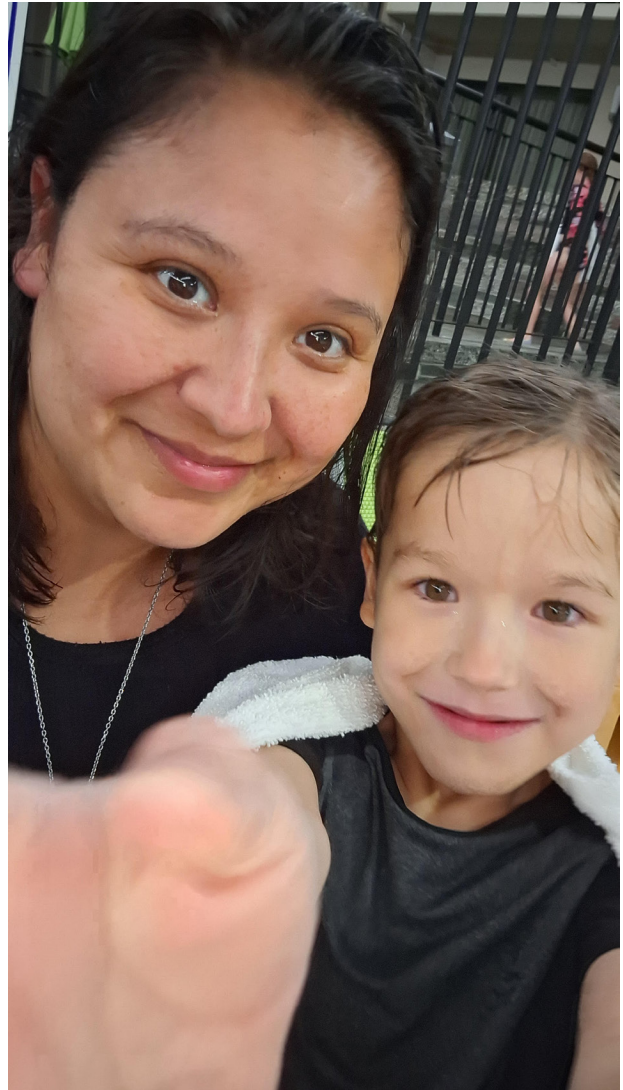
My son’s brain works differently from other children’s. Leaving the house feels like too much for him.

Trying a New Strategy

I thought back to a parenting session with the behavioral specialist Jason Dybsetter. He shared a strategy for how to get *neurodivergent* students to do what you need them to do. Basically, you offer them a reward. Jason was talking about bribery. Some children need an extrinsic motivator to help them along. It was an “Aha!” moment for me.

I grabbed my son’s iPad and I said to him, “Do you want your iPad?” He responded with, “Yes!” I said, “Okay, Let’s get in the car and go to town.” You know what my son did? He got into the car and we went to his appointment.

The iPad is a strong *extrinsic motivator* for my son. It helps him at school because without technology he wouldn’t be motivated to do his school work.



AFTER YOU READ: Use context clues to figure out what *extrinsic motivator* means. What do you think an *intrinsic motivator* is? Discuss the difference.

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