

Tips for Parents by Susie Kohl

“My Child Did What?” New Behaviors Blossom in Spring

“**I** NEVER THOUGHT MY CHILD WOULD DO THAT!” Spring behavior can be surprising. The same exuberant forces that make flowers bloom runs through our students. They want to expand and master new challenges. We have to give them new and more mature work. They are so eager to move forward, and our classrooms are alive with verve and imagination.

Part of that process can involve pushing the boundaries adults set for them. Someone told me recently, “It was hard for me to be a child. I wanted to make decisions for myself and be an adult.” New behaviors wake us up to the fact that they aren’t the same people they were in September. Trying to understand what’s involved in this new stage is a good way to reframe our consternation at boundary pushing. This is the time to pull out a book on child development and read about the next stage our children are entering.

We have to set limits, but their growth also asks us to communicate with them in new ways and offer them new responsibilities and privileges. We need to look at our schedules. Are children getting enough sleep? Are routines working? These kinds of assessments move us forward. It’s up to us to have faith in their development even when we aren’t ready for their new behaviors. Take heart when your child pushes ahead, even when it’s signaled by negative behavior. It’s up to us to have faith in children’s development and push ourselves to grow and respond in ways that support their growth.

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