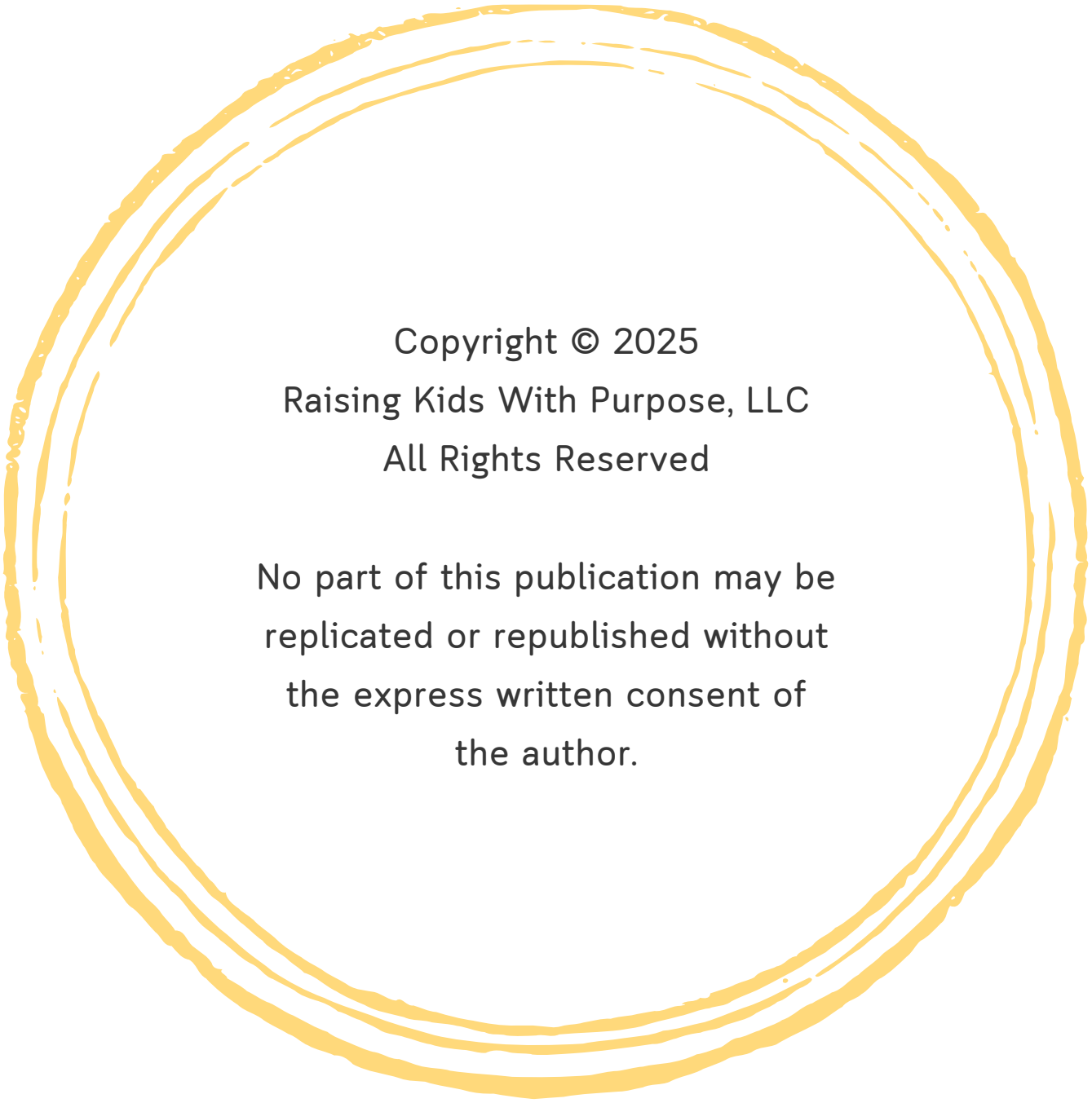


# HOW TO RAISE KIDS *with purpose*



A guide for parents  
raising kids with BIG behaviors



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# Welcome

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## *A Guide to Understanding and Supporting Challenging Behaviors*

Parenting is one of the most rewarding and deeply fulfilling experiences, It's also one of the hardest. If you've ever felt exhausted by power struggles, frustrated by meltdowns, or stuck in a cycle of reacting instead of responding, you are not alone.

**Here's the truth:** Challenging behaviors aren't just something to "fix" or "get rid of."

They are signals. Your child is communicating something. You can view behavior as messages from your child telling you what they need. When you shift your focus from controlling behavior to understanding it, you unlock the ability to guide your children with connection, compassion, and confidence.

This guide will introduce you to a connection-based, neurodevelopmental approach to parenting, one that helps you move beyond quick fixes and into lasting transformation for both you and your child.

“*All behavior is a form of communication.*”

Dr. Becky Bailey of Conscious Discipline

# You're in the right place if...

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- ♡ You're ready to feel calmer and more confident as a parent.
- ♡ You're struggling with your child's big emotions, meltdowns, or behavior challenges and don't know what to do.
- ♡ You're exhausted from power struggles, and traditional discipline strategies seem to make things worse or not make it better.
- ♡ You're raising a neurodivergent, high-energy, or strong-willed child and need strategies that help, not just quick fixes.
- ♡ You feel overwhelmed in parenting and are searching for support, systems, and self-care to make this journey easier.
- ♡ You're watching your teen pull away and long for a stronger, more connected relationship.

If any of this resonates with you, please **take a deep breath.**

You're not alone, and you don't have to figure it all out by yourself.

This guide will give you the tools, mindset shifts, and practical steps to navigate parenting with more confidence, clarity, and connection.

## A New Way Forward

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The fact that you're reading this means you're an intentional parent. You care deeply about your child and their future. This guide isn't about perfection. It's about progress.

It's about understanding why behaviors happen and learning how to respond in ways that help your child grow while also strengthening your relationship.

You don't have to do this alone. I'm here to help you move from frustration to clarity, from exhaustion to empowerment.

With joy,  
Adriane  
Founder, Raising Kids With Purpose

*Let's do this together!*

How to Raise Kids With Purpose



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How To Raise Kids With Purpose





# Understanding Behavior: The Root, Not the Reaction

*Behavior is communication.*

Every behavior, whether it's a meltdown, defiance, aggression, opposition, disobedience, or withdrawal, is a **message**.

Children, especially when they are young or overwhelmed, don't always have the words to express what they need. Instead, they show us through their actions:

- A tantrum might be a cry for connection.
- Defiance could be a sign of an unmet need for autonomy.
- Hitting may stem from frustration that a child doesn't know how to verbalize.

**Behavior typically is a lagging skill or unmet need.**

Kids are born with all the feelings and none of the skills to manage those feelings.

When we shift our perspective from:

"How do I stop this behavior?" → to → "What is my child trying to tell me?"

We unlock the ability to respond in a way that actually helps.

Rather than focusing only on stopping unwanted behavior, ask:

- What is my child feeling right now?
- What need isn't being met?
- How can I support my child in learning a better way?

Understanding behavior at its root doesn't mean ignoring it. It means responding with connection first. Correction comes second so that you're not just managing symptoms but helping your children build lifelong skills for emotional regulation, communication, and problem-solving.

*Let's take a deeper look at how you can start decoding your child's behaviors!*

# Understanding BEHAVIORS

## Reflection

When my child misbehaves, what do I assume they are trying to do? What else could be true?

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## What emotions do your kids express often that are hard to manage?

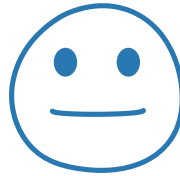
Write the specific emotions and match with an emoji (Ex: frustration, helplessness, anger, anxiety, self-doubt)



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## Pause & Decode Tool:



Pause & take a deep breath to slow down



Observe & attune to your child



Get curious! *What is the root cause of the behavior?*

## Take Action:

What is happening beneath the behavior?

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# Shift Your Response: Respond instead of react

*Your calm is their calm.*



Children don't just listen to what you say. Shocker!

**They absorb how you feel.**

When they are overwhelmed, dysregulated, or in the middle of a meltdown, their nervous system is looking to you for cues on how to respond. If we meet their chaos with our own frustration, it only escalates the situation. But if we stay calm, grounded, and regulated, we become their anchor, helping them find their way back to balance.

This process is called **nervous system co-regulation**, and it's one of the most powerful parenting tools there is!

Instead of trying to control your child's emotions, you can model regulation by managing your own. This doesn't mean suppressing emotions or pretending to be calm when you're not. It means learning how to pause, breathe, and respond intentionally rather than reacting impulsively.

When we practice co-regulation:

- Meltdowns become shorter and less intense.
- Power struggles decrease because our child feels safe and understood.
- We teach emotional regulation by example, helping our child develop lifelong coping skills.

When you react with yelling, frustration, or you shut down, you unintentionally amplify your child's stress, making it harder for them to calm down even though that is probably what you want.



# Shifting YOUR RESPONSE

## Reflection

How do I typically react to challenging behaviors? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does my child's response to me tell me about what they need? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When I stay calm, how does it affect my child's ability to regulate? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The goal isn't perfection. It's **awareness**. When we recognize our patterns, we can begin shifting from reacting to responding in ways that foster connection, trust, and emotional growth.

## PAUSE Tool:

Use this tool when emotions are high and you want to react on impulse. Remember: PAUSE first.



### Pay attention to your body

Notice your physical response. Is your heart racing? Are your shoulders tense? This is your body's way of signaling stress.



### Activate your breath

Take a slow inhale through your nose, hold for a moment, and exhale through your mouth. A deep breath gives your nervous system a moment to reset.



### Understand the trigger

Ask yourself: What about this moment is making me react? Is it truly about my child's behavior, or is something deeper being activated in me?



### Speak with intention

Instead of reacting with a command or frustration, try a neutral, grounding phrase. Ex: "I'm safe."



### Engage with connection

Once you're calm, respond to your child with curiosity and guidance. A gentle touch, validating words, or even just being present can help them co-regulate.





## Power of Connection: Feeling seen, heard and valued

*Kids need their developmental needs met before they can be guided toward better choices.*

It's easy to focus on fixing behavior, but the real magic happens when we shift our focus to strengthening connection first. Children are far more likely to listen, cooperate, and learn when they feel emotionally safe and connected to us.

How do you respond when someone criticizes you versus when someone makes you feel understood?

Kids are no different.

When a child feels judged, scolded, or dismissed, he or she shuts down. But when they feel seen, heard, and valued, they become open to guidance.

Instead of jumping straight to correction, start with connection:

- See the struggle underneath the behavior.
- Hear what your child is trying to express (even if they don't have the words).
- Value their emotions and perspective, even when you need to set a boundary.

When kids trust that we are on their side, they naturally become more receptive to redirection, problem-solving, and making better choices.

# Connect BEFORE CORRECTING

## Reflection

What makes my child feel most connected to me? \_\_\_\_\_

When do I see my kids light up? \_\_\_\_\_

How can I create more of these connection moments in our everyday life? \_\_\_\_\_

Connection is not about being a “perfect” parent, it’s about being a present parent.  
When you prioritize connection, cooperation follows.

## The 3C Method

*\*Inspired by Gordon Neufeld’s “Collect Before You Connect” framework*

### COLLECT

Before you address the behavior, gather your child’s attention in a gentle, non-threatening way.

- Make eye contact or get down on their level.
- Use a warm tone of voice (avoid harshness or urgency).
- Enter their world before guiding them out. Engage in what they’re doing first.

Example: If your child is playing and not listening, instead of demanding, “Put that away now!”, sit beside them and say, “Wow, that looks fun! Tell me about what you’re building.” Once the child is engaged, you can transition to the next step.

### CONNECT

Once you have the child’s attention, connect to create safety, and he or she will be open to your guidance.

- Offer a smile or touch (a hand on the back, a hug, a playful tap).
- Show understanding by naming their feelings: “I see you’re really into this right now.”
- Use gentle humor or a lighthearted approach to break the tension.

Example: “I know it’s hard to stop when you’re having fun. I get that! Let’s figure this out together.”

### CORRECT

Guide your child toward better behavior without power struggles.

- Keep it brief and clear (“It’s time to clean up now.”)
- Use collaborative language (“How about we do it together?”)
- Offer a choice or next step (“Do you want to put the cars away first or the blocks?”)

Example: Instead of, “Stop yelling at your sister right now!” → Try, “I know you’re upset. Let’s take a deep breath and talk about what happened. I’m here to help you.”



# Emotional Regulation:

Teaching kids what to do with big feelings

*Kids are born with all the emotions but no skills to manage those emotions.*

Imagine if, as adults, we were expected to handle every frustration, disappointment, or overwhelming emotion without ever having been taught how. That's exactly what happens to kids when they're expected to "calm down," "use their words," or "act their age" without the skills to do so.

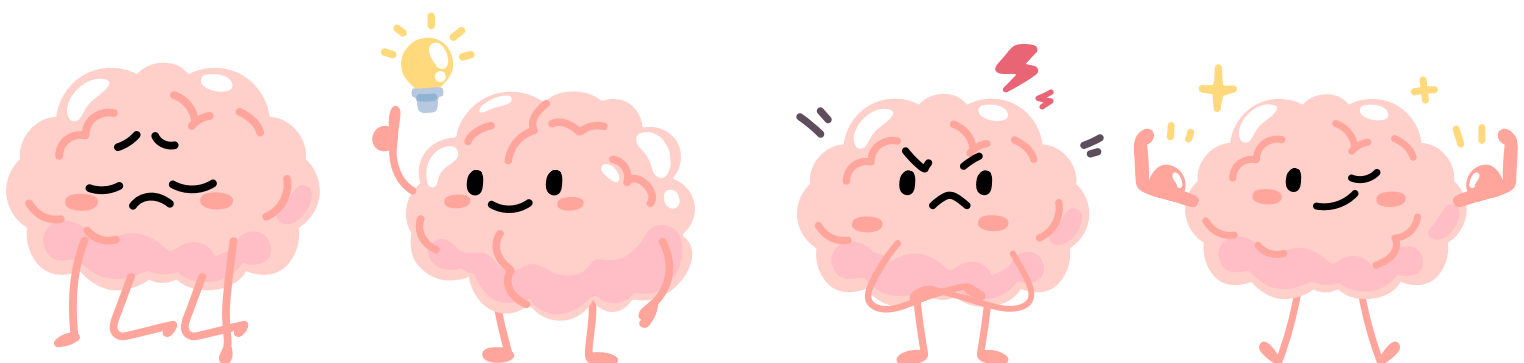
## **Emotional regulation is a learned skill!**

Kids develop this skill over time with the help of a regulated, responsive parent.

The problem is, when kids are in the middle of big emotions, whether it's a tantrum, meltdown, or outburst, their brains aren't ready to reason or even listen! The part of their brain responsible for logic, problem-solving, and self-control (the prefrontal cortex) isn't fully developed until a person is at least 25.

This means your first job isn't to teach or correct. It's your job to help your kids feel safe enough to calm down.

When you prioritize regulation first, you create the conditions for kids to actually learn how to manage their emotions, without shame, fear, or disconnection.



# Teaching EMOTIONAL REGULATION

## Reflection

How do I handle big emotions? \_\_\_\_\_

When I feel overwhelmed, how do I self-regulate? \_\_\_\_\_

What messages have I modeled about emotional expression? \_\_\_\_\_

## The 3 R's

*Regulate, Relate, Reason*

### Regulate

Before anything else, co-regulation is key. A dysregulated child needs a regulated adult to anchor them.

- Stay calm: Your nervous system will guide theirs.
- Use a soothing tone: Lower your voice instead of raising it.
- Offer sensory support: Deep breaths, hugs, movement, or a quiet space.

**Example:** Instead of saying, "Stop crying! It's not a big deal," try, "I see you're really upset. Let's take a deep breath together."

### Relate

Once your child begins to settle, help him or her to feel understood and supported.

- Name the feeling: "You're feeling frustrated right now."
- Offer comfort: Give a hug, make eye contact, or get below their eye level.
- Validate their experience: "That was really hard for you."

**Example:** Instead of saying, "You shouldn't be mad about this," try, "I know you wanted that to go differently. It's okay to be upset."

### Reason

You can help them process and problem-solve **only** after they are calm and connected

- Ask instead of saying: "What do you think we can do next time?"
- Brainstorm solutions together: "Let's figure out a way to make this work."
- Teach coping strategies: "Next time you feel this way, you can try asking for help."

**Example:** Instead of saying, "Why did you hit your brother? That's not okay," try, "I know you were mad, but hitting hurts. What else could you do next time?"



# Breaking the Cycle:

## Rewriting your parenting story

*Parenting patterns come from childhood experiences, but you have the power to change them.*



So much of how you parent isn't just about your kids. It's about you.

The way you respond in difficult moments is often shaped by the way you were treated as a child. The messages you received growing up, whether they were spoken directly or absorbed through experience, become the automatic scripts you may repeat when we're stressed, overwhelmed, or triggered.



### Maybe you grew up hearing:

★ "Stop crying! You're fine." →  
Now, you struggle to validate  
your child's emotions.

★ "Because I said so!" →  
Now, you find yourself reacting  
with control instead of  
connection.

★ "Good kids don't talk back."  
→ Now, you feel frustrated  
when your child challenges  
you.

★ "If you're a bad (boy/girl), I'm  
taking away \_\_\_\_" → Now, you  
rely on threats or punishments  
when you feel out of control.

➡ **These patterns don't mean you're failing as a parent.**

They simply mean you're human!

You have an opportunity to break the cycle  
and create something new.

**The good news?** Awareness is the first step  
to change. When you recognize the  
unconscious patterns driving our reactions,  
we can choose a different way forward.

**You are not bound by your reactions.** The  
patterns that shaped you don't have to  
define you.

With intention and practice, you can  
become the adult you needed, and the  
parent your child needs now.



# Rewriting YOUR PARENTING PATTERN

## Reflection

What parenting messages from my past still shape how I respond today? \_\_\_\_\_

When I feel triggered, what old wounds or beliefs might be influencing my reaction? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of parent do I want to be? \_\_\_\_\_

## Rewire & Reflect

### Step 1: Identify a Triggering Moment

Think of a time when your child's behavior really set you off. Maybe it was backtalk, defiance, or an emotional meltdown.

### Step 2: Look Deeper

Ask yourself:

- What was I feeling in that moment? (Powerless? Disrespected? Out of control?)
- When else in my life have I felt this way? (As a child? In school? At work?)
- What belief about parenting or discipline was running through my head?

### Step 3: Rewrite the Narrative

- What do I want to believe instead?
- How can I respond differently next time?
- What new parenting script do I want to model for my child?



*Breaking cycles takes time, but each pause, reflection, and intentional response creates lasting change*

# Practical Tools

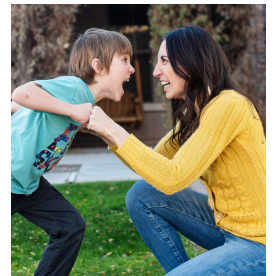
## For Common Behavior Challenges

### Tantrums

Tantrums aren't about manipulation. They're a child's way of expressing emotions they don't yet know how to manage.

Instead of shutting it down, ride the wave with them:

- Stay nearby and calm: Your presence is regulating.
- Acknowledge their feelings: "I see you're really upset. I'm here."
- Offer comfort, not control: Let them release their emotions before problem-solving.



### Defiance

When kids push back, they're often seeking *autonomy* or *struggling with emotional overwhelm*. Instead of battling for control:

- Stay curious: "I see you don't want to do this. What's up?"
- Give limited choices: "Do you want to brush teeth first or get dressed first?"
- Offer a redo: "Let's try that again with a different tone."



### Sibling Fights

Instead of deciding who's right or wrong, guide them in solving conflicts:

- Separate and regulate: Help each child calm down before talking.
- Simply state what you see is happening in a neutral way.
- Acknowledge both perspectives: "I hear that you feel frustrated."
- Guide your kids to find a solution that works for both of them: "There must be something we can do."



# More Practical Tools

## For Common Behavior Challenges

### Transitions

Moving from one activity to another is tough for kids. Instead of sudden demands:

- Give a heads-up: “Five more minutes, then we clean up.”
- Use a transition tool: Timers, songs, or a countdown.
- Make it a team effort: “Let’s race to see who cleans up faster!”



### Power Struggles

When kids dig in their heels, connection (not control) is the way through. Power struggles feel like a game of tug-of-war, with each person pulling harder to win.

But what happens if you drop the rope instead of pulling back? The struggle ends.



Use this mantra: “Don’t pick up the rope.” Instead of engaging in a battle of wills, focus on staying calm and connected while holding firm boundaries.

- Lower your energy: Match their intensity with calmness.
- Acknowledge their perspective: “*I know this isn’t what you want.*”
- Set the boundary with kindness: “*We still have to do it, but I’ll help.*”





# Next Steps

for raising kids with purpose

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Parenting is a journey! It's constantly evolving as your child grows and as you grow alongside them. The fact that you're here, learning and making intentional shifts, is already creating a lasting impact.

**Let's take a moment to recap the key takeaways from this guide:**

1. Behavior is communication: When we look beneath the surface, we can respond with understanding instead of frustration.
2. Your calm is their calm: Co-regulation is the most powerful tool for helping kids manage big emotions.
3. Connection before correction: Kids are more likely to listen and cooperate when they feel seen, heard, and valued.
4. Emotional regulation is a learned skill, and kids learn best when we model it first.
5. Breaking cycles takes time: Every pause, reflection, and intentional response creates a new legacy.
6. You don't have to do this alone: Having the right support can make all the difference.





# Ready for more support?

This guide is just the beginning! If you're feeling stuck, overwhelmed, or ready to dive deeper into parenting with purpose, I'd love to help.



💡 Book a Free Discovery Call → Let's chat about your biggest parenting challenges and how I can support you in creating a more peaceful, connected home.

[BOOK YOUR CALL](#)

If you're ready for transformation, you can [Join the P.U.R.P.O.S.E. Parent Transformation Program now!](#)

It's a 12-week coaching program designed to help you shift from frustration to confidence with personalized strategies, expert guidance, and a supportive community.

You don't have to navigate this alone! Let's work together to help you feel calmer, more confident, and deeply connected to your child. Your family deserves it. 🧡

With joy,

*Adriane*



[www.raisingkidswithpurpose.com](http://www.raisingkidswithpurpose.com)

