

# Podcast Ep 3

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child, potty training, potty, verbal, foundational skills, autism, trained, communication, sign, diapers, behavior, shit, diagnosed, training, parents, rogers, baby, adult, potty train, stemming

## SPEAKERS

Michelle Rogers

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00:04

Welcome to the autism mommy's potty talk Podcast. I'm a Shelby Rogers, autism mom and life coach, I help parents of children with autism who are pre verbal to start communicating a potty train



Michelle Rogers 00:17

guarantee. Hey, everybody, welcome back. This is Shelby Rogers here. I hope you're enjoying our podcast recordings. I've never done anything like this before. It's kind of fun. It's kind of foreign. So I'm just gonna jump right in here. Okay, so I thought we would start talking about skills for independence. So let's say you are newly diagnosed, or you've been in this club for a while you have a child with autism that's been either newly diagnosed with autism, or you've been here for a while. And you've seen you know, maybe your progress has been stagnant. You're you want to reshuffle the deck, you want to let's get going. Let's focus on what I need to help my baby. And a lot of the times when I thought about me back in the day, when this happened to me, it was like, Okay, we have this diagnosis, and what do we want to work on first? And the first thing I did the first thing I was thinking at that time was like, I need to find somebody who can tell me the path tell me what to do and what what steps to take and where I should focus and what I should be asking and, and what kind of therapies I should be putting in front of her. And that's another reason why I do what I do. Because nobody was I couldn't find anybody to do that for me. And I even had it in my head down to like, the dollar amount. I think I said I would spend \$5,000, or something like that. And I had no money back then I would spend \$5,000. If somebody could just tell me what path to take. For my girl she's diagnosed, I don't know what to do, I need to help her time is so valuable. I always see time as currency for our babies on the spectrum. So I always aim believe that back at day one, and you want to be so careful on how you spend that currency. And then I said, Okay, you know, what do I need to do. And I remember thinking in my head, I'd spent \$5,000, for a qualified whoever to tell me what to do to help my baby. And at the end of the day, if some if I had actually found someone, they said the price was 10, I probably would have found the money. Because I was so desperate, I had no idea what to do. It's like a chicken with its head cut off. I had no idea what direction to turn. Here we are diagnosed, I'm panicking. I'm scared and terrified all the things

and had no idea where to go. So this episode is gonna be specifically to teach you where you should start. So I followed many people in this world of autism, there are so many great therapists, teachers, mentors, I love Temple Grandin. She's an example. She is a adult living with autism. She's a scientist. She's a professor. I believe she has her PhD. And she also is a woman with autism who lives an amazing life with autism. So I've always considered her such an amazing mentor. I do love Mary Barbara, she wrote a book I read immediately after my daughter was diagnosed called the verbal behavior approach. She is an amazing tactical boss. And I remember watching one of her videos, and this was later down the line. But this is exactly what we did. And I believe in this as well, if we want to if we want to shoot for the stars for our babies, and we want to have the best shot and an independent life, you need foundational skills. And there's three foundational skills that Mary quoted and I I invested in this too, that will lead your child to have this life of independence. And the first one is potty training. And boy, it training is my jam. I am the potty whisperer. I am Pioche I'm chi training my cats right now. That's how I tell confident I am in my body training skills I have there is not one child that has come through my group coaching program and I'm pointing to my wall here. So pictures of all the babies from all the families that are in my group coaching program, there is not one child that is left my 90 Day program without being potty trained. Meaning that if you're you came to me, one of your goals is potty training we worked on by training, you didn't leave my program without that happening. So by training, which is one of the three foundational skills that is my jam. So why is potty training like mandatory one of the mandatories and we'll go over that in a minute. Let me tell you the three first and then we'll go through each individually. The second one is communication skills. And this does not mean they have to be verbal. Big big disclaimer. We hear we, as Gen pop people, general population, people put communication and verbal as the same thing, they we think they mean the same thing. And they don't, they're actually quite different and one really can't live without the other and vice versa. We want our children to be able to communicate and it doesn't need to be verbal. So that's your second foundational skill to have a chance to independent life. And then the third one is, we want to make sure that there is no problem behavior, or minimal problem behavior, you know, like tantrums, like the, you know, a neurotypical child could have a tantrum here and there, but like, we don't want excessive problem behavior. And this one I added on, but I think she might have said this, too, I'm not sure can sit and attend as well. And it's like, wow, these are like, the things these if you can get these things, your chances for your child to have an independent life increase dramatically. And we're going to kind of break down each one and why it's so important. So the first one is potty training. I love this one. It wasn't my first aha for me, my first aha for me was communication. But potty training is probably about 80% of my families come to me. They pay for the program, and I need a program to learn and get support around all things autism, but they wouldn't be happy and delighted to have me to take their money in exchange for never, you know, being able to never have to change a shit or pice diaper again. So 80% of my family's come in, like I need to hydrate this kid is kids 357 2531 We need to get we're done. Man we want out of diapers. And one of the things I want to put out there and I'm sure you know, I'm gonna get my hate mail first don't really give a shit is that most, if not all, children and adults on the spectrum. If they are ambulatory, if I always say it's my family, so can they use a fucking iPad? Because if they can use an iPhone or an iPad, they can be potty trained. And people are like, how could you? You can't say that? Uh, yeah, Buckingham, because we've taught we've we've taught hundreds of children and adults, all with various degrees of autism in the sense of like, the severity of their symptoms of autism. And, and I pulled my BCBA's and ever and they've got years combined, like 30 years of combined experience along with my nine or whatever years I've had, and we've not come across a child or an adult, we can't potty train, we have so many examples of how it can be done. If they are ambulatory, and they can use a fucking iPad, you need a baseline, if you're making use of fucking iPad, they can potty train. So let's so that I know is gonna you know, love or hate me. That's what I believe I know it for a fact

others not one family. I'm like, You know what, we've been working on this for the 90 days and it's just it's not in the cards for your kid, here's your money back and I'll give you your money back. I'll give them their money back if I don't do it, but I've never not done it. And this is why because if you're sitting here and you're working on it with me, and I believe that if your child can have all of the certain skills, like I had a mom who said like, Oh, I just I don't even know if he could do this, but he could read out of a book. I mean, he could read like a page, page page read out of a book. I just I don't think he's gonna get the concept that you know, pionship go here. No, that's not gonna happen. I really think man like what if I can probably read better than me and you're telling me you can't get your shit in the pool and the toilet? That's thought check thought check. That's what's going on in your head. Mommy, this child is very, very smart. I've had parents come to me and say, You know what? They'll pee on the potty. No problem and, but when they want to take his shit, they ask for the pull up, or they get it themselves. They go in the bathroom, they take the dump, and then they call the parent to come and clean them up. But that child I just don't see it's No, I don't think they're ever gonna get it. They've created the toilet in there pull up. Okay, so yeah, if they can manually pull up their underpants because they don't want to who wants to sit and shit underwear? Not me. Right? Not them either. Go run and grab a pull up. Put that on shitting on pull up and then have you come and clean it and you're thinking of it? I don't know. I don't know if they could figure out that that's got to go in the toilet bullshit. Unintended anyway. So the reason why this is one of the foundational skills and I'm sure this probably goes without saying is that there are a lot of activities or a lot of things in life that require you to be potty trained. And as adults that are you know, potty trained and we're neurotypical, we take this for granted because you know, we think about like, well how important is it well as an adult that has to change those shit diapers of this three 510 21 year old, you know that it really impacts the quality of life for you. It'll plaque impact the clock Only of life for your child, there will be things that they won't be able to do, there'll be programs that maybe they won't be able to get into unless they're potty trained.



Michelle Rogers 10:07

We've had this mom that I was telling you about who your son like, would read like pages and books, was being held in a very a class that he was behind in academically because the world class that he belonged in requires potty training. So it was just a good example of how potty training is holding this child back from moving forward in his educational in his in his education, because he to go on to a classroom that's teaching more complicated things, he has to be potty trained. So that's just one example there. Also, just in general, like if I want, if I'm looking towards independence, and my child or my, you know, adult child can't master this, how are they going to live alone? How are they going to live with minimal support? It's, it's impossible. And think about the task. I know you don't have to think about it. If you're in this club, I get it. You know what it feels like to change the shit diaper of cones day in and day out. I always think about like, you know, if we want independence one day, who's going to change that shit diaper reviewing around. So it's just one of these things that is so uncomfortable. In the sense, I think this is probably why I'm become the potty whisperer. And it's funny because you know, I came in here, I'm like, I'm gonna teach parents, all the things about autism, I did not think I'd be spending 80% of my time in the toilet, but that's fine. I love it. I love it. I love I love it, we're gonna hydrate my cats, it's going to be great. But what I'm saying here is that that the reason why this is probably the first thing and it's so important is because it's so it's so life limiting. And the in the experiences that you have as a family isn't experiences that your child can have as well. And we actually have an example that I've shared a few times of a woman who potty trained at the age of 21. And this is such an interesting, I don't want to go off on a super tangent here. But it was such an interesting example because her family had tried to potty

train her over the years several times. And they told her all their friends and family. I mean, it's just, it's not in the cards for her. She can't she can't do it. She's 222, autistic, severely autistic, whatever the label was, that they gave her. And then any special education community. Depending on your state, most kids can stay in a school placement till the age of 21. And this woman was in the school placements at age 21. Her parents lined up a beautiful, beautiful school for her to transition to for adults, and they're getting everything ready. And she's about to graduate from the one school go into this school. And I don't know how it happened. But somebody dropped the ball to bring them what? She's in diapers, she can't come here. And the parents like, What do you mean, we already paid the deposit and we want the school? We looked everywhere. And she has to come here? No, no. What are you talking about? No, no, it's clear in our manual or whatever. I don't know how this got overlooked. But she cannot come here if she's not potty trained. And then all of a sudden, she 21 years old, in diapers up until that point was potty trained by her parents. And this is such a good example of of the mind. And I keep coming back to this I spoke about it in the last episode spec speaking about it today is that up until that point, her parents thought it wasn't in the cards for this child to potty train until their y became so compelling that they had no choice that they wanted to go to this beautiful school that they had picked out for her to transition to. She had to be potty trained. So now in their minds, it shifted her their thought shifted from it's not in the cards, she can't lie. We've tried 100 times it's just too weak, you know, they try it 100 times and quit. This time around. There still has to change because otherwise she can't get into that school. And then what's gonna happen to her? That's what they're thinking. So in their head, they're like, We have to make this work. And now we choose pi train at 21. Now, what does that mean? Does that mean that she all of a sudden a 21 Oh, I got it now. All these years? It wasn't landing but now all of a sudden it's landing? No, her parents didn't believe that she could do it. So it never happened. So they always quit. But when they wanted her to get into the school, and there was no other option she had to be potty trained or she couldn't come here their reasoning their compelling Why was big enough that they had to change their thinking and and make it happen? This Britt this this example always like blows my mind because this poor family was changing shit diapers till 21 When she could have potty trained all along. But they had decided in their head that it probably wasn't in the cards for her until they needed it to be in the courts for now, I don't want anybody here to make decisions based on that. I want you all to make decisions based on, I choose to potty train because it potty training is not optional in this household, I choose the by train because I want my child to have an independent light. And when I'm listening to Michelle, and that's one of the three, this has to happen no matter what. And autism is not going to stop it from happening. My thoughts about autism are not going to stop it from happening. I certainly don't want my brain with my shitty thoughts rolling around in it, stopping my child from gaining this important life skill 1/3 of the foundational skills needed for independence. So that's why pilot training is so important. And I want to share that example because it gets so powerful to realize like how amazing our mind can be, and also how dangerous it can be. This isn't my quote, I think it was a Brianna, I don't want to I don't want to I think her name was Brianna. Anyway, she said the mind is like a furnace. It can either warm your house or burn it down.



Michelle Rogers 16:08

And this whole example is a good example of that. Didn't need me to get off on a tangent. But it's important to explain why pi training is a third of the foundational skills. The second one is communication. So why is that so important? That one makes more I think that one makes a lot of connections for all of us, right? We have to be able to have conversations, communicate wants and needs to be able to progress in life. And that does not need to be verbal. There's

plenty of examples. I think over the last year there was a valedictorian in Florida that was nonverbal. I actually don't like to say nonverbal. I say pre verbal, but she calls herself nonverbals. So I'm an honor that and she sought she talks through a communication device, she is going to have a career. She can't be independent, and she is not verbal. Now I know we're all when we think of communication skills, we're all dying for the verbal. And we work really hard on that and group but I don't start anybody like who's got a child that is pre verbal. Great. Let's start working on strategies to get him to to get them to be verbal. No, I don't fucking do that. Because it's because I believe communication is more valuable. Especially if, if you want to have verbal at some point. So for me, in my experience, even with my own daughter, I wanted to hear her voice so bad. I was like, oh, therapist, tell me what we want to do. I want to hear a voice willing to it and you're like, great. Let's see your backs. And you know, a peg starts picture exchange system, where you basically have a book with all these things that she always asked for, and you and you prompt her to pull the picture out of what she wants, and you give her the item. And I'm like, What the fuck does that have to do with verbal? I want your voice. And they're like, no, no, this is the hat. And I'm like, Well, I just don't understand, like, you know, how is this going to teach her You're not even trying to get sounds out of her. You're just like, listen, it's the path. I didn't even understand it back then I was really like, confused. But like I at that point, I got out of my shitstorm in my head. I was in denial for a while it was grieving this newer, typical childhood that I was getting robbed up, I got all passed all that bullshit. And I'm like, Alright, let's get to work. They're like, great. We're gonna teach you how to use a book with pictures. And I'm like, What the fuck does that have to do with verbal? But now I understand and studies are out there to squash the crazy moms like me who are like, Why would I even do that it's we're not even working on making sounds is that if the majority of children who learned a bridge form of communication, whether it be sign language packs, or communicate through an AAC device, those children have an even stronger chance of developing language, actual verbal language in the future. So I was I was all in, I didn't understand it. That's what they wanted to do. And then when we started with the packs, when a Juliana stems that she takes she don't battle toys or toy men, and she take them to like, twist her hands like crazy. And she started doing that with the experts to try to show her like, alright, you want areas over here and over and showing her where the picture is and give them we give her the chair and she's just like, soon as you handle the pictures, like just, you know, stemming out on it, her hands are like moving. So I'm like, Guys, this ain't working because she's just stemming on the actual cards. So then I had made the decision based on what I saw. I'm not an I'm not a special education, like we got to do something else. We'll be spinning our wheels with this for a while because she's just so fixated on on spinning the car and not using it functionally. So then we decided I said let's try sign language and I was really scared back I think Seiling was was the first suggestion and I shit on it because I didn't I was really scared of sign language because I was like sign language. She's never going to talk like if she starts signing Why would she ever talk? And I'm still even to this day trying to explain in words what I saw when she learned sign language and that you know, it is natural for our new or typical brains to assume that if they sign that they'll never talk? Because like, why would they ever use their voice if they could just get what they need with their hands. But it was such a fascinating thing to watch, it was almost like this is the fact of it is that it brought my baby back to me, it was the first thing that brought her out of her, her world, and brought her back to me, and brought a relationship started to build back our relationship as mother and child again. And the reason that was, was that first off, she learned 10 signs, like within a week, it was insane. And we made our own signs, we didn't go we took some signs from American Sign Language, but we actually, because she was so little, we modified them to like hand gestures she could use if you actually look at like real sign language, super fancy finger movements, I don't even know if I could do it. And so we said, you know, we wanted to give her 10 signs for things that she asked for every day, and we made the science super intentional. So I think this means more.

And when you put your little hands together, and you squeeze your little nails from both hands, because if you're just listening, you can't see what I'm doing. But if you just does, you know kind of putting your hands together, you that means more in American Sign, which I fucking hate more, and please and give me a like crap, I want to be very intentional with every sign I taught her. So we actually made that sign for cookie. And then we did like a sign for Cookie, iPad, her bottle, TV going outside potty, we had a bunch of different signs for her. And as she learned them so fast, it was just blew my mind. So I just want to say science is your representation of communication. And you're going to take it to the next level when they learn that bridge form of communication. So that's either signs packs, which is the picture exchange system I talked about, and then an eye at a AAC device. So an AAC device is like, is like signs on. It's like the pictures on an iPad app. And then when they hit the picture for the certain things, it makes the signs. So it makes the sign excuse me, it makes the sounds. So second, foundational skill needed for a chance of the life of independence is communication. If you work on communication from that aspect, and build it up from there. Your chances of a vocal child are they increase at such an exponential rate, bridge form fluently first. And then we can start to think about are they creating sounds great are they repeaters? I love repeaters because repeaters mean that they can actually create words with their with their voice. Now we just need to shape that behavior into functional language. So that's the second one. And then the third one obvious, I think this one, again, more obvious is the not having so much problem behavior. Now, the third one kind of ties with communication, because nine times out of 10, a child gets aggressive bites, kits, kicks, punch screams, tantrums, because they can't communicate what they need. And they get frustrated. And if you think about it for a child that has no other form of communication, that type of behavior probably serves many well because nobody wants to hear screaming kid, nobody wants a kid hitting them, biting them, punching them, whatever. So they kind of get that behavior reinforced by our response to it. So obviously, we handle all of these kinds of things in my program. But these are the top three that we work on. And we start here and then we can build out. And it's really fascinating because for me, I didn't know this at the time I listened to Mary had said this at another time, I think I'd heard it in a workshop or something she had said, and I was doing this automatically. And now when I think about all of our kids that have seen progress in the program, these are the things we work on 80% of what we're working on by training first, then we can start working on communication and and the problem behavior usually kind of extinguishes on its own or it starts to become less and less and less, because the communication is so tied to it. So I just wanted to share this today. I hope this was helpful. If you have any questions you can reach out to us on our website, Michelle B. Rogers R o g e r s . c o m . But I think that if you're looking for a starting point and you didn't know where to go, this is an excellent place to start potty training. Communication. Don't obsess on the verbal I know we have that desire. Don't obsess on it yet. And reducing got aggressive or problem behavior. I hope this was helpful. See in the next episode



25:10

if you're ready to help your baby now with potty training, communication or stopping their problem behaviors, I want to invite you to watch my free 10 minute video training that shows you how I took my daughter with autism from pre verbal to sign language potty training with a sign to making sounds and then speaking, head over to Michelle be rogers.com forward slash training. That's Michelle mi ch e l l e . B a s i n b o y , R o g e r s , r o g e r s . c o m forward slash training. See you there

