

Ep53 - Next Level Wins_ The Future You're Fighting For

 Fri, Sep 19, 2025 3:26AM  28:52

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Autism mommies, potty talk, Juliana update, integrated kindergarten, potty trained, communication, problem behaviors, braces, dental appointments, orthodontist, swim team, love languages, advocacy, milestones, parenting challenges.

SPEAKERS

Speaker 2, Speaker 1, Michelle Rogers, Speaker 3



Speaker 1 00:04

Welcome to the autism mommies potty talk Podcast. I'm Michelle B Rogers autism mom and life coach. I help parents of children with autism who are pre verbal to start communicating and potty train. Guaranteed.



Speaker 2 00:22

You You're listening to the autism moms potty talk Podcast, episode 53



Michelle Rogers 00:26

this week, we would actually talk today about a little Juliana update, because, right? The reason why I think it's important to talk about Juliana today, she's my baby, so she's always important to talk about, but the reason why I love talking about her is because she is next leveling, and we're living the next level life. We've been living the next level life since she's had the big three. Since she was probably in in kindergarten, right? It's fine. She probably had the big She definitely had the big three before then. But I when she was in preschool, right before she became elementary school aged, it was I remember sitting at a table with some moms, and we all had this idea of like, Boy, wouldn't it be fabulous if we could get into integrated kindergarten? And I remember thinking, wouldn't this be wonderful, right? The main goal of Juliana's life at that point was, I got to get her an integrated kindergarten. The reason what integrated kindergarten is, and might be called different things in different states, is it is when you are in a classroom with neurotypical peers, and there's some kids in there with IEPs, could be autism, could be other things, and you have to finish curriculum. So that means that she's on par to have a diploma like general ed kids, even though she's technically a special ed kid. So it was very important to me at that time to have that as the goal post. I've refined that goal post in here and in champions, because that goal post really means, listen, to be able to have a

shot at being a part of a community like that, right to be in a classroom like that, you have to be potty trained, right? Because they can't be taking taking time away from from Gen Ed kids to go and, you know, take your kid to the bathroom or change diapers. They have to be able to communicate and communicate. I would, you know, I think you probably could be an integrated classroom if you spoke fluently with an AAC device, but I'm assuming you'd have to be one of these spellers for that. And then the third part of this is you can't have problem behaviors, right? Because if you have problem behaviors, and it's disrupting class, and everybody can learn, and you can't learn either. So that's how I kind of shaped the the big three, so to speak. So the reason why I thought it'd be good to do an update here about Julianne is because she's living a next level life, and I want this for all children, and I want you to see the kinds of things that we step into, even though she's in such a she's in a wonderful place. Now, there was a time where, after she was diagnosed, I thought that, you know, does this mean that she's going to need a group home? Does this mean that my family's going to have to take care of her when we're gone? Does this mean that she's going to be a burden to her brother because he was a newborn at the time, if he didn't have autism, I was worried about him having autism too. And then I thought, okay, maybe this is a scenario where she's going to end up in a group about I had no idea, but I knew that I didn't want to leave this earth as a mother not thinking I gave it everything I got, even if that was potentially going to be the outcome. So even when I went to work to do what I did and to create what I've created for her, and what you guys have created for your kids, or in the process of creating for your kids, it doesn't matter when you're taking the action in the moment. It matters most that you show up and give it everything you got, because as your kid, deserves that, and you deserve that too. You didn't come to be a parent just to half ass it. You want to go full throttle into it. So I thought it would be good today to kind of share an update on Juliana, some of the things that we're working on. I think I'm going to do this periodically, just to kind of give you guys a check in, right? She's She is the inspiration for why I do this work, and I think it might be good just to keep you guys inspired as to what you're fighting for when you're cleaning up the rug because there's another pee or poop accident, when you're trying to get them to communicate and they're tantruming or you're getting hit and you just want to quit. I want to maybe. I want this talk to be motivation for you to understand, like there are bigger things that you're fighting for, and I want you to think about that too. So okay, so I have three milestones I'd like to share with you. These are real time things that have happened to us. It's been over the some of these have been over the course of years, but building up to what I'm going to share, and then some of it just kind of happened. So the first thing I wanted to share is that, if you didn't all know, Juliana has braces now, and that was I remember taking her to hold on

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Speaker 3 04:53

one second here, folks, bear with me here. I think my mic just cut out. Bear with me. So make sure i. Hold on, bear with me. One second, guys, Oh, it fell out that would probably there we go. Okay, just want to make sure you guys can hear me.



05:18

Bear with me, I'm going to assume, Oh, my camera went out too.



05:32

Bear with me. Oh, I think I'm there.



Michelle Rogers 05:41

Can you hear me? Hold on, just testing my microphone. Yep, it's there. Okay, perfect. So the idea here is that is to kind of share with you guys some milestones that we've, that we've successfully have been navigating, so that you know what you're fighting for. Alright? So without further ado, the first thing if you didn't already know is Juliana has braces, and that was a big deal for us, because braces is a process and requires a lot of sitting in the chair and opening your mouth for long periods of time and being kind of uncomfortable as they're cleaning your teeth and doing whatever they need to do with it. I remember not thinking about it, which I don't understand why I didn't at the time she was probably, I think the first time I took her to the dentist, like, really, took her was probably three, and it was a disaster. She wouldn't maybe, no, no, maybe it was five. I was a little late to the party because I was just not wanting to do it, right? I was, I like, you know, we've been through a lot, and I kind of, I wasn't sure she was going to be a hard time. And I was like, maybe I'll just give it a couple, maybe age will make this better, right? And sure as shit, we go in, and when she's probably about five for the first time to the dentist, please don't judge me. And she was horrible. She didn't want to sit for the pictures. She wouldn't let them open her mouth. It was she was running around the room. It was a real disaster. And I remember leaving there feeling like so devastated. I know how it was going to solve this. And then we ended up a year later because it was very traumatic experience where she was not very pleasant at that at that dentist is at all. I found a dentist that I thought would be more gentle with us, and I explained the situation over the phone, like, listen, we've really hadn't had a fabulous experience going to the dentist. I have been prepping her. So at that point, I was create. I had created social stories. We had worked on it as a team with her home team, or ABA, to kind of talk about, this is what happens at the dentist. We role played with dolls. We really tried to do everything we could to kind of get her back there, and she ended up going, and it turned out that she had two cavities and needed to remove two baby teeth. And I was like, freaking. I'm like, How the heck are we going to do that? We barely got her to sit in the chair to let the lady count and gently clean her teeth, and this is what needed to happen. So I said, Okay, I remember going up to the receptionist desk with a pen and paper. I said, she'll tell me the exact steps of what it is that's going to happen when we come back to do this work. And they gave it to me, and they said she's going to wear this mask. It's like the laughing gas. They're going to do the Novocaine, all this stuff and and our, I said, All right, can we, can we finagle it where she's not necessarily seeing the shot? They say, you know, the thing is on her nose, and she's laying like this is probably not going to see we really worked out the whole thing. We even went there and sat in the waiting room to even get up to the point where she could even just sit for the cleaning. That's, I mean, we went to the we visited the waiting room like, three or four times before she actually went for that initial successful cleaning appointment. So this was definitely super trauma for me, right? We had to build up just to even get there for the first appointment. Now, we've got to come back for a big appointment. I remember it was a big deal. I took off of work, my had my husband, uh, take off of work, just for moral support and our I even had our BCBA come to this to the appointment, just to help us, in case there was any issues. We ended up creating this great protocol, I believe it is in the stuff in the in the in the vault, about how to go to the dentist. And if you need have any specific questions about that, you can always email me. So anyway, so she's been going to the dentist now regularly, every six months for her cleaning. About a year ago, the dentist said she's got to see an orthodontist. Heard there's too much crowding. She has over 12 I think at that time, she had 13 baby teeth that still hadn't come down. She's 12 years old, right? So they

said she's got a young dental age, and that her teeth are not coming in because and it's too crowded in there. She had her two front teeth come in, and one was kind of pushed forward. If you look at some of the pictures I've posted, you could kind of see that. So it was time to go. And we've been going to the orthodontist probably for about a year now, and about maybe not a year, almost years. So I'd say about nine months ago, the Orthodontist said she needs a palate expander. And if you don't know what this is, something that they put at the top of her mouth, and they expand your jaw so it makes room for the baby tooth to come out, and the big teeth to come down. And you have to crank this thing every night. Yep, there's a little key you have to put into the a little hole in this, in this, in this palette expander. And every night you've got to crank it down. And what that does is, every night, it gently spreads the it's it gently makes the palate expander spread in her mouth, which is making. Jaw wider. And I was just like, I don't know how we're gonna do this. I have no idea, you know, I, you know, I shouldn't say that, because she had been we got through that. We ended up setting up a beautiful protocol to get her through that, the fillings and the wiggling out of those two baby teeth that needed to come out. And she did beautifully. And I think the reason she did beautifully is that we set it up so that, if you do good, we're going to a bounce place afterwards. We gave her a break card. She got to wear sunglasses in the chair so the light didn't bother she got to have like, a little, a little stuffy old and it ended up going really, really well. And it's been that way ever since. And I guess I still remember that running around the dentist's office and that disaster and her screaming and crying and them trying to hold her down experience, and even now, when they say that she needs like, or, you know, orthodontal work, I'm terrified, right? But she really handled it well. She ended up putting the palate expander in. She let me crank it every night, and now I don't have to crank it anymore. And then we went to the dentist a month ago, and she said, Juliana, your your your palate expander is expanded perfectly. We don't want to expand it anymore. Would you like braces? You're going to need braces. We're in stage one. There's like stages to to fixing teeth with orthodontal work. And they said you're in stage one, and once we get the baby teeth to fall out, you're going to get a full mouth of braces, but while we're waiting for the new room to do its job and more baby teeth to fall out, would you like braces to straighten your front teeth? And it's so funny because she didn't ask me, and I'm like, I'm so used to being the one that they all talk to, so she's sitting there, Juliana, would you like me to fix those front teeth so they look better. We don't have to do it, but if you want, we can give you braces now and they'll look better. And Juliana said yes. And I was so shocked, because she had been through putting the PAL expander in the twisting her mouth open with that thing. I mean, I you know, she's been such a trooper. And I was like, Listen, if she says no, I'm okay with it, I'm not even gonna chime in. But she said, Yes, that that, you know, she's in middle school now, and I think she sees other kids with braces, kids fixing their teeth, and she's ready to have her teeth fixed. And I thought that was such a special moment. The way she asked her was so sweet, you're gonna cry, and the way that she answered her, Yes, I like my teeth straightened, getting a little emotional. It's it's such a growth moment, because you're learning to be an advocate. You have to advocate for what your child needs, and they're watching, and she's advocating for herself in her special way. And she we got the braces put on about three weeks ago, her teeth are already straightening. It's absolutely blowing my mind, how quick they're straightening, and she is so proud. And she sat through the whole thing like a trooper, and they let her pick the color of the little clicky thing that goes into the brace. Got little blue braces, absolutely precious, and she's doing it. She's doing things that I didn't even think was possible not so long ago. So very proud of her on her own. It was a big advocacy win. And I think she advocates for herself, because she watches what we're doing. And I want you to think about this too. The advocacy isn't just about getting your way and getting services. You're teaching your children in this process how to speak up for themselves. So I thought that was a really I just wanted to share that update because I'm very proud of her. She's wearing braces. We go at it was sore. It wasn't pleasant, but, you know, I think it was great to have it only on

the four front teeth to straighten them, versus the whole mouth. I remember when I had braces when I was a kid, it was on my full mouth, and it was really painful, and it was sore for her, but then it went away after a day, we have a protocol of, like, applesauce and like, soft stuff she can eat if it were bothering her. And she really, she handled it now she kind of knows what to expect, and there's really no anxiety around it for her. It's just me. But anyway, I'm very proud of her. So that was win number one. Win number two that I wanted to share, that I'm very, also very proud of, is Julian, as



Michelle Rogers 13:54

in seventh grade, and I wanted her to be in school sports right now with swim, because swim isn't your average bear sport right around here. Soccer is hard core, and then all the others, like basketball, volleyball, baseball, swim isn't really on the trajectory, usually, in like the school system, unless your school has a pool, it's not really like a big thing. And of course, our school doesn't have a pool. I don't know how it doesn't, but it doesn't, doesn't have a pool, even though all the taxes we pay and I said, okay, but she swims at a club. And the club she swims at, it's not like a club, like a country club. She swim. They all call them swim clubs. They're USA sanctioned swim clubs. So they actually are sanctioned by whatever sanctioning body does, the Olympics, the swim Olympics. So it's really like the best place you could swim if you want to be a competitive swimmer. And she also swims for our local Jewish Community Center. We're not Jewish, but the Jewish Community Center is down the block, so it's super convenient for me. So she swims there, and it's partnered with a swim club, a part of the USA Swimming sanction committee, or whatever it's called. So she's, she's a really good swimmer, so I can't so when I went in for parent teacher conference last year. Right? It's like, you go to every teacher and you have like, a five minute conversation with every teacher. I chose to go, you know, you can't really do all of them, because it's so the building's so big, and all you only get five minutes. And these teachers appointments fill up. So one of the appointments I was able to get was with the gym teacher. So I talked to gym teacher, I asked her how she was doing. Said, oh, you know, he said she was doing fabulous. She's a she participates, great, blah, blah, blah. And I said, Do you have a swim team for the school? And he said, the high school does. And so okay, and he's like, but if she's a really good swimmer, she can try out as a seventh grader. I said, Well, how does that work? I had no idea, right? I'm not I'm not a shocker, I'm not athletic, I'm not a sports person. So I didn't know that something like this existed. But had we not had that conversation, and I not, like, poked around, she wasn't going to know something like that that came from us. So it was like, Okay, awesome. Tell us. Tell me. How does that work? He said, well, she's got to take some sort of physical fitness test, and then if she passes the physical fitness test, then she can try out with the high schoolers. So I said, Okay, right. So we go through this, Julianne is like, Mom, I can't do that. They're going to be way better than me. They're going to be bigger than me. You know, you know, she's like, I think right now on our swim team, she's probably the middle of the road, but I think she's going to get better. We ended up having to take a step back from swim a little bit last year because she broke her thumb, and school work with. Going from elementary school to middle school was a big change, and we needed to spend more time at home getting used to our systems and creating study guides and getting our homework done and getting organized with all the different subjects that she didn't swim as much as we'd like. So I'd say she's she's an average swimmer. I think she's got potential to be a really good swimmer, but right now, she's average. We got time to grow and work on it, so I wasn't really concerned, but she's saying, because of where she has is as a swimmer, she's not going to make this team. And I said, why don't we just try it and just see? I said, why they're giving you the opportunity to try out? You go and do the tests, you try out, and if you make it, you make it. You don't, you know, no big deal. But I said, what an honor

it would be for you, Juliana, to be a seventh grader on a varsity high school swim team. So we go and we go there. And she didn't want me to stay, so I didn't, but I did notice when I dropped her off, she looked nervous. Understandably, she doesn't know any of these girls, and they all looked huge, like they're very big girls, right? They're tall big girls because they're high schoolers. I said, don't worry. Just do your best. And I left, and then I came back 10 minutes before, because I can't help myself. I know it wasn't supposed to she saw me and got so mad, but I can help myself. And I watched, and I said, Okay, let's see how she lines up. And I was like, You know what? I don't know anything, but it looks like she's on par with them. It looks like she's going to be able to swim with them. So I'm like, okay, all right, you know, I'm like, I'm not thinking anything, not thinking anything. And next thing, I get an email and they say that she made the team. And I was like, Oh my gosh, my little seventh grader made the team. She's not the only seventh grader, which is nice. There's 1/8 grader that made it and another seventh grader that made it, so she didn't know them. So this is an opportunity for her to meet some kids that are her age. So that's a win, win there. And she's gonna get to meet, get to hang out with high school kids. School kids. What a win, win. So the thing came out to like, Okay, here's her. She hears her coat. They have a coat. They I forgot what they call it now, now, now, I totally forgot. She got her swim cap, and then she's got her her swim coat and and she's got to wear those to her meets. And she had to come last Saturday the high school and get her picture taken with the team. It was very cute. And she was, she didn't like, outwardly show excitement, but she was excited, and it was just like, Oh, look at you. You're so excited. And she was, she didn't like, she was smiling, like, with no, with no, with no, no teeth. She just like, you know, a little grin. But I could tell that she was proud of herself. I could tell she's really excited to be there. I think that she's really looking forward to going to swim meets with and meeting, you know, hanging out with these high school kids and swimming. And I think it's just such a nice thing for her. And had I not opened my mouth, right? Had I not advocated for her ask questions about this, she wouldn't have had this opportunity. Would it be nicer if she were with peers that were her age. You know what part of me is like, yes, and part of me is like, no. Maybe this will be good because she gets to meet older kids, and then it's kind of going to set her up for when she starts high school, she's going to know some kids that go to the high school already. So I think it's a win, win. It's not a ton of kids. I want to say it's probably like 15 girls total, but But it's fun. It's fun to think about her being here. And I could tell, even though she didn't hourly show it, that she was, you know, quietly proud of herself in her Julianna way. And she knows this is a big deal. And when the thing came out to buy all the like swag, all the merch, like, you know, you can buy their shorts and buy their shirt. Of course, I bought myself one, and her dad one, but she was very clear, can I get two of these and two of the sweatshirts? And she's gonna, she cannot wait to wear that sweatshirt to school, at middle school, and it says varsity high school swim team. So it was, it was cool, right? So even though she may not show it in ways that are like the way that you and I see things, she. Showing it, and so I thought that was fabulous. So anyway, I wanted to share that milestone. And then the third milestone, which it's not necessarily a milestone, it's just a more of a awakening for me, is that recently, a friend of mine had mentioned that it looks outwardly that I favor Cody over Juliana, and they named some examples about like, how it looked that way. And I felt really bad after they said it, and we were out together, and that's when this observation was made. And it stung to hear that, but once I kind of let the sting die down, I really had a chance to reflect from a clean space as to why someone would perceive that, and do I think I'm doing that because obviously, as a parent, you don't want to do that. There are times in a kid's life where you're going to spend more time with one than the other, and then it could shift, and then it's the other one, and then the other one. I remember a time when Juliana was just diagnosed, and Cody was a baby, and they were doing some sort of special eval in the living room, and I had to take Cody and bring him into another room, and I'm sitting there playing with him on the on the floor of his bedroom. And I realized in that moment, oh my gosh. You know, I feel like I haven't

other than like changing him and sometimes sleeping with him and feeding him. I really hadn't spent a lot of time just enjoying him. I felt immense amount of guilt come over me in that moment, because she needed so much support my newborn or he was six months at the time, my six month old wasn't getting any type of quality attention from me, and I remember thinking like, I can't have this continue. How can I solve this problem? And the solution came to me within a matter of minutes, like Cody's got to be a part of Juliana's therapies. And that's kind of how it had been and how it has been even up into this day. We've got chores that we do at home. We have room checks. It's not just for Juliana. Cody's got to get his room done too. And of course, you know, Juliana's services are for Juliana, but we make it so that he's a part of everything too. And she's old enough now to understand that they are there for her. They're not there for both of them, and sometimes I think that might bother her a little bit too, but we make sure that he's included in some of the suffering as well, and sense of like chores and to learning skills that you may not want to learn, and all of the things. And that's kind of how I tried to balance my energy between the two. But as they've grown, I've noticed that Cody is a very affectionate his love language. This is like a love Island thing, because we love, love, love Island. I try to fast forward through the dirty parts. Don't worry. But we have this thing where Cody's love language is is



Michelle Rogers 22:38

physical touch and words of affirmation. He likes to be told he's loved. He likes to be told what a great boy he is. He likes all those things. Juliana doesn't like any of that. Now, I know there may be kids that have different flavors, like, Oh, I like to be talked to like this. I like to be touched like this. She recoils at the idea of a lot of praise and does not want to be touched, physically touched, and it does that bother me. Of course, it does, you know. So I know, because I'm with her all the time, that that's not her love language. So I say, Okay, well, what is Juliana's love language? And I went to dinner with a friend last night, and she said, I understand Juliana love language because I had told her what this other person had said, and then I told her, what my reflection on that was, is that I know how I treat my kids, and then I know that one child loves a certain way, and another child loves a different way, and I love them equally, and that she gets loved how she gets loved like she likes, and he gets loved how he likes. And she said to me, I understand, because Juliana's love language is my love like Juliana loves trips. Juliana loves experiences, and that's her love language. And I couldn't agree more. She likes to try new things. She likes adventure. She likes to just be if I had to explain my relationship with Juliana and our love of each other, she likes to just be near me. She likes to be in parallel to me. If I'm in this room, she likes to be in the room next to me, even if I'm in the house, she's in the backyard. I'm not suggesting to be right near me. She likes to just be in proximity to the people that she cares about. And that's her love language. So I know like we're doing a lot, Cody's a dancer, and he's, he's now acting, and he's, he's, he's got an acting coach, and we've done some things out in California, and she comes for those things. And I guess it could perceive that she's tagging along and being forced to be a part of this. But I make these experiences even though we may be out there for a specific agenda for one child, how it's wonderful for her, like we get to go to go to the beach, we get to go to a park, we get to go to do things that I know she loves to do. And once I had time to reflect after this person commented that I felt really bad, and I thought, Oh my gosh. You know, am I really. Be favoring one over the other. I remember having that feeling the other way when, when she was diagnosed and needed all this care and attention support, and he was a baby, and I felt like I wasn't giving him any love. And I realized I solved for it back then, and I've naturally solved for it now, in the sense of meeting my kids where they're at and she's not, she doesn't like the traditional showing of love. She's She's not like that. She doesn't need that type of connection with me. She needs the

connection that fuels her more. So I have a not so I have a very typical loving maybe, I guess, quote, unquote, typical loving relationship with my son, where he loves to be cuddled and affection and words of affirmation. And I, and we sell Julianne a good job. I don't want you think that we don't say that to her. We do say we're proud we were of her. This was a big deal that she made the team, proud of her, that she she got our braces, but we don't go ham. Cody loves a Cody loves a ham fest. But on my relationship, I guess you could say with Cody is a typical one, and my relationship with, uh, Juliana is a diver, a neuro diverse one. And I accept that some people are going to see maybe, if they're close to us, they're going to see it and not understand it. And it hurts when somebody says things like that. But once I can get past being human and feeling a certain way about somebody saying something, I could say, okay, you know, actually, this is okay, because they don't have to understand. I know my baby. I know I love my child. Our bond is strong, and she receives love in the way that she wants to receive it. And it reminded me, you know, how important it is to tune into our children's love language instead of assuming it should look like everyone else is saying, If I had, if I hadn't had confidence in myself as a mother and I took this person's comments to heart, I might change the way I love on her, which might make the relationship not as good as it is. Now, I think we have a great relationship her and I, and she loves being a part of Cody's life. Cody's doing some really funky things, and I think she, she gets a real kick out of it, and I think he encourages her, and I think it's, it's a healthy dynamic, even though it may not be the typical dynamic that everyone's accustomed to. So anyhow, I wanted today to be a little bit of an update on Juliana. I hope this was helpful, just to give you guys another reminder of what you're fighting for. These are the milestones that are coming for you, and that I know sometimes, when you're in the throes of trying to get your kids to say sounds, or get your kids to use the pack system, or get your kids on the toilet, it can feel like, you know what is, what's the point? You know? What's the point of all this? If you can do that, if you can weather the storm, all of these beautiful, wonderful visions of your future are waiting for you. You could have a child that happily puts on braces. You have a child that's in seventh grade, that's on a varsity swim team in our high school. It's It's so exciting. And you could have a child that is able to that you're able to have a very deep loving, loving relationship with, even if isn't what the typical world is isn't is used to experiencing. So I hope it was helpful that I shared this. I will see you all next week. Bye, everyone.

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Speaker 1 28:10

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 B, rogers.com, forward slash training. That's Michelle M, I, C, H, E, L, L, E, B, as in boy. Rogers, R, O, G, E, R, s.com, forward slash training. See you. There you.