

Ep58 - The Messiness of Autism Parenting

📅 Fri, Oct 24, 2025 1:47AM ⌚ 15:41

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Autism parenting, emotional mess, middle school transition, executive functioning, homework issues, communication misalignments, IEP (Individualized Education Program), routines, study habits, tutoring, behavior management, coaching program, personalized blueprints, mindset support, tactical support.

SPEAKERS

Speaker 1, Michelle Rogers



Speaker 1 00:00

B, welcome to the autism mommy's 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 a potty train. Guarantee you're



Michelle Rogers 00:22

listening. To the autism moms potty talk Podcast, episode 58 Hey parents, Michelle here, and today's topic for the podcast I wanted to dive deep into. It's called the messiness of autism parenting. And I'm not necessarily talking about your kitchen or their bedrooms or your car floor. I'm talking about the emotional, mental and logistical mess that piles up when you're raising a child with autism and trying to do it well. So let's dive right into it. Three weeks ago, we had started school, and everything seemed to be going well, but then my spidey senses started to tingle. So if you guys don't already know, Juliana is now middle school age, and we transitioned quite well from, you know, from, I guess, the elementary school years to middle school in the sense of the tactical things, like, she learned how to use her combination lock. She was, she was walking her schedule. We went to go to the school multiple times so she could feel acclimated. I did all of the tactical things that made her enjoy her first couple of days, and she was really getting into it. So that was great, but I started to notice that she was coming home and doing her homework, and there was just something that felt off to me. And it wasn't dramatic, but it was kind of like a subtle thing, that something's kind of off. And I could feel like, I always kind of have these visuals with my kids where I kind of feel like, Oh, I see cracks starting to appear on the foundation. So the things that kind of came up, you know, are probably subtle to most. And listen, she's come such a far away. And I think people always try to remind me that, oh, you know, she's come such a far away. You really should be, you know, grateful for where she is, and I am grateful, but my job as her parent is never done, and it wouldn't be done whether or not she was on the spectrum or not, whether she was, you know, level three on the autism spectrum, and now she's level one or level zero, or whatever you'd want to call her now, and my job is never done, period, as a parent, that's just kind of how I see it. And I'm all at this point, I always call it like with her, where she's at, like we're fine tuning the dials. So things were starting to come up that were kind of showing cracks in the foundation that you've got to be kind of aware, to look out for. So I just wanted to share this with you, because my examples may be a lot different than some of my listeners, and that's okay. I think we have I think I have listeners that have children all over the spectrum. I have listeners that have children like young children. I have listeners that have teenagers. Even have some listeners that have adult kids on the spectrum. And all of our kids have different different abilities on the spectrum. Some kids aren't potty trained yet. Some kids are working on communication. Some kids have all that, but they're working on their social skills. So I'm going to give my example, but I want you to understand that this is actually can. Can Do you know, indicative of wherever you are in your autism parenting journey is when you start to notice the cracks. I always like to I always like to play offense, not defense, right? So I always like to get ahead of things and not let things, kind of, you know, overwhelm me. So what I'm going to share with you are the cracks that I'm seeing from where we are in our autism journey. So we start Middle School, everything looks great, and then I start to notice what I feel are like cracks in the foundation. The first thing that happened is she missed her first science lab, and she was and this one was she was kind of excited about they told her to make it up, and no one was helping her figure out how. And my daughter, like most of our kids, isn't the kind of kid who's going to raise her hand and ask for clarity. She'll sit there and sink and I remember when this first happened,



Michelle Rogers 04:10

she told me that the teacher was getting her mixed up with somebody else in the class, and it turned and of course, too, she says, you know, and she's so upset when she hears that she missed a science lab. I'm immediately, you know, oo. mama bear on this teacher. Like. how

could you mix her up with somebody else? And teachers like, I know I didn't mix her up and and this is what happened. And it turned out that Juliana missed this lab. And what ended up happening was, is that I feel like she just, I don't think she was deliberately deceptive, but she didn't really know how to handle the Pro, like, I think she didn't know how to handle telling me that she was supposed to do the lab on her own, and she was doing it as they were, I guess, going over it. And I think there was just some sort of miscommunication. So that was the first crack that I kind of felt was going on. The second one was her man. Math test came back and it had an 80 on it. Now, I don't care about grades for the sake of grades, but I do care when I see signs that the execute, I guess, like, I'd call it like the X, like, executive functioning skills just aren't sticking. Like, she didn't study, she didn't tell me a test was coming. And I don't think it's because, again, I don't think it's because she doesn't care, but because she's never really learned how to study and how to kind of be responsible for that. So I felt like she was floating a little bit. And then the third crack that kind of said, Okay, I think we need to come to the IEP table. Was a drama over missing homework. She swore she turned it in, but she didn't. And when I asked her about it, she kind of snapped. And then I got an attitude, and then I got defensive, but what I really got was like a mirror, because the truth is that I've been scattered. Personally, I've been disorganized, and I've been dropping balls too. So here's the thing. You know, elementary school is just such another such a different animal. You have one teacher, you kind of have assignments from this one teacher, and you're good to go. Middle schools got all these different teachers with all these different personalities. Everybody speaks at a different rate. Everybody gives homework differently, different subjects. It's, it's a lot for me, it's like, I'm going back to school too, because I forgot how I managed this as a child going through this. And it wasn't like I just came out of it, like I remember seventh grade being, you know, very difficult, because it was a major transition year of, how do I keep up with all of these different expectations? And it took a couple of years of me figuring it out on my own and maybe getting some help from teachers back then I don't really remember of how to stay on top of what was expected of me. So this is kind of what was happening for her, and I guess it's happening for me too, because I'm overwhelmed. She I'm trying to keep the schedule she normally has, where she was swimming five days a week on her team, and having her go to school. And I'm like, wait a minute. I'm struggling to even keep up with what the expectation is for for these classes. Maybe we need to all to kind of take a look at this. For all of us, I'm being scattered with this. I feel like I'm being disorganized, and that's where, that's where cracks in the foundation show up. And this is what I want you to hear. If the foundation isn't solid at home, things don't just stay where they are. They kind of slide and then slowly, then suddenly, then all of a sudden, you've got a big problem that you have to fix. And you know, that's why, you know, over the last couple of weeks, I've decided we're going to go back to the basics, and what that looks like in our home is we're pulling out the whiteboard. We're writing down the nightly routine. We're breaking up the weekends into chunks so we can stop feeling like everything's a fire drill. And I'm not trying to fix her. I'm fixing the system around her that I let go because life got busy and we have I run a group coaching program specifically for parents of children with autism, and we actually have an awesome BCBA in there who's had like, 30 years of experience, and she's worked with not just children, but like, teens and adults with autism. And I actually got help. I said, You know what? I'm going to get one of my BCBAs who has experience with kids that are higher functioning on the autism who are struggling with these new routines and the new expectations to help me come up with a plan for her sometimes. And that's why I love coaching, because I can see your blind spots. As your coach, I could see your blind spots. And this, PCBA is going to help me to see my wants blind spots. So this is what I want you guys to kind of like take away today is that the bigger truth is this happens in all areas, and not just schools. So my example is specific to what we're going through with Juliana, but if you're focusing on potty training, and potty training gets loose, what happens? Accidents start up again. And if communication gets loose, suddenly you're back to whining and pointing.

And if I start getting loose on boundaries around behavior, then welcome back tantrums, right? So nothing stays frozen. You're either reinforcing a skill or you're losing it, but you're not broken, and your kid's not broken either. This is like, I don't think there's anything wrong with Julianne. I actually took more of the responsibility on myself that I didn't prepare her best enough. I thought the tactical part of this meaning, like getting her used to a new routine, getting up a lot earlier, changing classrooms, getting to each class on time, I was more obsessed with the logisticals, not even thinking about the academic, academic and, you know, the demands that were going to be put on her specifically. And we're still trying to find our way with this stuff. I, you know, it's funny because there seems to always be a little bit of a misalignment with communication. So for example, I just got I set up in her IEP, when all of this went down, like, listen, I'd like a weekly report, some sort of just a status update from all of her subject teachers. So I know what to look out for. I know if there's any issues. And something came in about a week ago saying that she that that that seats had to be moved in art and that she was behind in a project. When she came home, I asked her about it, and she said that I'm not behind the project, and my seat wasn't moved. So I assumed, again, I went in Mama Bear mode, like she's getting her mixed. She said, there's two other Julianas in the class. There's three Juliana's in this class. So I immediately go back and say, she's mixing my kid up with another kid. The same thing. It's very funny. Juliana is very funny, the way, I guess I'm funny too, because we're both like, she it's like, the same problem we just had with science. And then the teacher comes back and she says, I know exactly who I'm talking about. Julianna is definitely behind now, not in one art project, but two art projects, and she was on a table that was talkative, and I had to move seats. And then I realized, when I went back and checked the original note, she didn't say she moved Juliana's seat. She said she moved seats. And I was like, Oh, I misunderstood. I misread it, thinking she moved Juliana's seat. And Juliana heard it the same way. I guess I kind of heard it my answer. My seat wasn't moved, so she's definitely not talking about me. But then, as I talked to Juliana, and we kind of broke it down, she acknowledged that, you know what, maybe I am behind in this and like, we're still having, like, even at this stage, like communication misalignments, so tightening up my process of making sure she's studying, making sure she's studying in a way that's effective for her, making sure she's checking her her it's not a Google Classroom, but like, like a parent portal. I give her my access so she could see if she's missing assignments. These are the kinds of things we're going to help her to get through these new challenges, these new expectations of her, and if I can't create that foundation at home with the expectations and how we manage things, and I can't help her do better as well. So that's why I decided that we were going back to the basics, so that we could get to a point where we kind of get things going again in a really smooth fashion, and then she can kind of carry it out in her own way with her schedule and the responsibilities she now has a middle school. And I want you to think about that as well, that if you're feeling the pull of a little bit of regression, I want you to look around your life. Are things a little messy right now? And it's okay if things are a little messy, but then we got to do something about if things are a little messy, we've got to, you know, write the ship. We've got at least, to call it out for what it is, and say, Hey, listen, I'm a little sloppier than I like. Let me tighten things up. And then and get back to the things I know that have worked. I reinstall the routine, I revisit the expectations, and I reset the tone, and that's what I've been doing with her, not from a place of good, of guilt. This isn't like this is a judgment free zone. Life likes us. It life's all of us. But when you make this decision, you go back to being the leader of your household, which is what these babies need. They need you. No matter how old your baby is. I'm always going to call them a baby, but they need you to act as the leader when it comes to stuff like this, in moments of like this, where it feels kind of shaky and turmoil, that's where you have to become the leader. So we made some difficult decisions. Juliana hadn't been working with a tutor. I lost that tutor. I'm looking for another one. We do not use electronics to study. We write out our study notes on index cards. She tends to absorb the information quicker that way, if she needs help in the

assignment, she's to make sure she does homework as soon as she gets home, so that the phones go on the counter. They get a 10 minute break. So if they want to look at their phones for 10 minutes, they can then it goes on the counter. And she does not cannot pick up electronics until all of her work is done, including creating study material and reviewing it for upcoming tests, right? So we really tighten things up, and because of that, she's doing so much better now, and she will go in for extra help as needed, and she's already gone in. She's coming home late today to finish those art projects. So this is the kind of stuff that we do, and it's the kind of stuff that I want you guys to be thinking about too. If things are slipping, it's a judgment free zone. But if it's slipping, let's fix it. Get, get, get, tighten it up, reinstall your routines, revisit the expectations, and get going on it. And this is what we do all the time in my program. This is all we do all day long. We're coach we coach all week, and



Michelle Rogers 14:04

we really just help you guys create these customized, personalized blueprints to help your child when things like this happen. And I think that's what's so nice about coaching and mindset support and tactical support. It's like a garden that you're, that you're, you know, growing fruit, and it constantly needs to be watered. It needs to be, you know, the weeds taken out of it needs to be, needs to be tendered to. So this is what happens, even as parents. I'm always looking, I'm always thinking, I'm always trying to educate myself to help them thrive. That's my number one job, number one job outside of coaching, you guys. So I hope this was helpful. It's the messiness of autism parenting. It happens to all of us, even happens to seasoned individuals. I'd like to consider myself seasoned at this point. I cannot believe she's gonna be 13 next next month. It's blowing my mind. But I hope this was helpful, and I will see you guys next week. Bye, everyone, if



Speaker 1 14:59

you're ready to help. Up 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.