

Shining with ADHD by The Childhood Collective

Episode #160: What Every ADHD Parent Needs to Hear

Katie: Your child's ADHD is not a reflection of your parenting.

Katie: Hi there. We are The Childhood Collective, and we have helped thousands of overwhelmed parents find joy and confidence in raising their child with ADHD. I'm Katie, a speech language pathologist.

Lori: And I'm Lori.

Mallory: And I'm Mallory. And we're both child psychologists.

Lori: As busy mamas ourselves, we are on a mission to support ADHD parents on this beautiful and chaotic parenting journey.

Mallory: If you are looking for honest ADHD parenting stories, a dose of empathy with a side of humor and practical tools, you are in the right place.

Katie: Let's help your family shine with ADHD.

Katie: You don't want your child to struggle for years and dread going to school. But without an understanding of the school system, you are overwhelmed and confused about how to really help them.

Mallory: Luckily, you don't have to be an expert in school law to get your child the support they need. But you do need to know your child's rights and school terminology so you can be a competent advocate for your child.

Lori: In our online course, *Shining at School*, we walk you through navigating the school system and identifying the right supports for your child with ADHD. From getting an evaluation, to creating an IEP or 504 plan, to knowing your legal rights and next steps when you disagree with the school.

Katie: We have taken the most important information we would give you in a one-on-one consultation and broken it down into simple, easy to understand lessons.

Mallory: Wherever you are in the school process, we created Shining at School for you and your family.

Lori: You want to feel confident and know that your child is happy and thriving at school. Head to thechildhoodcollective.com to check out Shining at School and use the exclusive code PODCAST for 10% off. You can also find the link and code in the show notes.

Katie: Today is our last episode of season one of Shining with ADHD, and I'm going gonna be honest, it kind of seems like a really long time ago that we sat down to record our first episode. So, I don't really know what to think.

Mallory: I know. I mean, I think back to when we first started recording episodes for the podcast, we were all so nervous. Actually, Katie, maybe you weren't, because you love to talk, but I was nervous.

Lori: I was so nervous.

Mallory: And we, like, wanted to script out every single word of the podcast, which is hilarious.

Katie: Yes. And really not that feasible, let's be honest.

Mallory: No.

Lori: No. And people don't want to hear us reading a script.

Mallory: No.

Lori: Yeah I, do you remember when we all sat down because some of our first episodes we were like all together with like one mic, and we recorded an entire episode and forgot to turn the mic on.

Katie: Oh, my gosh. Yeah. It was actually muted, and we had absolutely no sound. And I was, I'm not gonna lie, I was mad. Like, I was the tech person, and I was like, this is never gonna work.

Lori: Yeah. And it used to like take me, like, I'm not kidding probably 30 minutes to get the right setup with my mic and getting everything at the right level for, like, the episodes. And now I just, like, come in the office and, like, throw it all together in like a minute.

Mallory: We've come a long way.

Lori: We have.

Mallory: I'm proud of us. Sixty episodes like, that is no small feat. We've learned a lot.

Katie: Yes.

Mallory: And we're super excited to already be thinking about season two. We have some really great guests lined up. I'm so excited for them. Another thing that we're wanting to do for season two is introduce some Q and A's. So take some questions from our listeners and actually answer them on some episodes of the podcast. So please send in your questions so we can start thinking about setting those up.

Lori: Yeah. And we want to just take one moment to really thank you all, all of our listeners for being here, for subscribing, for leaving your reviews. Every time we get a new review, I want you to know that we screenshot it, and we have a text thread, and we send it to each other, and we're like, yay. And it is those reviews and the emails that you guys send about how it's changing your life and how much you appreciate it. It literally brings us life. It is life giving to us, and it keeps us motivated and keeps us going. So we really just want to thank you so much for being here and sharing the podcast with friends and family. And, you know, it just means so much to us.

Katie: It does. And we are going to take a short break over the summer so that we can spend a little bit more time with our families. And luckily, we have 60 episodes for you to go back and listen to if you're newer here, but if season one has helped you in any way, we would just love it if you would consider leaving us a review. Like Lori said, that is incredibly helpful to us, and it really motivates us in those harder days. But it's also the main way that our podcast has been able to grow. And reviews, a lot of people don't realize, but reviews are what helps us be exposed to more ADHD families. So as we really want to get this information out to

people, you leaving a review is incredibly helpful. So if you have a minute, it would truly mean the world to us.

Mallory: Absolutely. I'm so proud of us, girls! Season one.

Lori: Really!

Katie: We have to figure out a good way to celebrate our end of season one. We haven't figured it out yet, so if anyone has any recommendations, please send them our way.

Lori: Yes.

Mallory: Love it.

Katie: Yes.

Mallory: So we know a lot of you don't have a huge village on your parenting journey. And parenting ADHD can be really lonely when you don't have a lot of people around you who are understanding, who are accepting.

Katie: Yes. Because all the way through, as you get your diagnosis and you navigate the treatment options for ADHD, it just brings up a huge rollercoaster of emotions that a lot of people really can't relate to.

Lori: Yeah. And we know from talking with so many families over the years that many families don't get the encouraging words that they need. They don't get the support that they need. They don't, maybe don't have a close friend or family member that they confide in that really supports them and their child on the journey that they're on.

Mallory: So to wrap up season one, we thought that we'd leave you with some important reminders for those hard days because we're walking this path right along with you.

Lori: Yeah. And we want you to have something to turn back to. Like, whenever you're having a hard day, just go back to this podcast. Just go listen to it and remind yourself of some of these things because we know you need it and you need it often.

Katie: Yeah. And when we were planning this episode out, it was sort of like, what would I say to my friend over a cup of coffee if she was telling me, like, this is just really, really hard. And so that's what we want you to hear today. And the very first one is probably my personal favorite, it's also the one I struggle with the most, and that is that your child's ADHD is not a reflection of your parenting. And in that same boat, you really are the best person to help your child. And that can be confusing because it might seem like, oh, well, if I'm the best person to help my child, then it must be that I'm doing something wrong, right? And we even talk about this because we teach in our courses and on Instagram, parent behavior training, where we help you support your child. And the implication kind of, sort of might feel like, well, then, it's me. And it's not you, okay? You did not cause your child's ADHD. If you have a diagnosis of ADHD or you suspect that you might have a diagnosis, then it is certainly possible that it is inherited. As, as you might know, ADHD is strongly heritable. But at the same time, that does not mean that you're doing something wrong in your parenting. And if anything, you actually have an amazing opportunity to help your child and support them and help them to grow their skills and really just grow into a healthy, happy person.

Lori: Yep. And we can see too many of you have multiple kids and you might have parented them exactly the same, but your kids are individuals and they're unique and you could do the same thing with one and it's not going to work for the other. And so just, again, it's just not the same.

Katie: It's so true. That is totally my children. Like, they are literally just ying and yang. I don't know if that's the right way to say it, but I'm like, my husband and I just look at each other all the time and we're like, oh, my goodness. Like, everything, even like their pain tolerance. Like, one is, gets the smallest little scratch and is just like in tears and one can just jump off an entire playset, hit her head, and she's just like I'm good. We're fine. So everything my kids do, they just are so opposite of each other and just want to touch on going back to if you yourself, or your spouse or your partner has a diagnosis of ADHD, we get so many messages that say, I don't know how to help my child because I also have ADHD. And there's just a really deep sadness in a lot of these messages where parents are like, what if I can't do it? And I want to speak to this personally because a lot of people in my family are diagnosed with ADHD and there's something really cool about that, actually. And, it's I can say that I truly can really know and understand where my child is coming from in a situation that a lot of parents might not be able to understand. And I can really advocate for them because I have

been there and I understand. And especially a lot of us grew up where we didn't have a diagnosis, that really wasn't that well understood, especially in women. So you may not have gotten support or help as a child. And as a parent with ADHD, you are really well equipped, actually to understand and really offer your child just a lot of understanding. And for parents who do not have a diagnosis of ADHD or don't suspect that they have ADHD, that's also great because a lot of what we recommend, as you know, is building in routines and building in schedules and structure, and that is going to be easier a lot of times for parents who do not have a diagnosis. So really, regardless of where you're standing, you as the parent are absolutely the best person to help your child. And we want to encourage you to just let go of any guilt or shame that it's your fault or that you're causing this. It's really not a reflection of you. And you might have to tell yourself that a lot of times before you really start to believe it. But, but practice, practice that mantra and really understand, like, this is not a reflection of me. I'm showing up and I'm doing my best for my kids.

Lori: Yes, and along those same lines, the next thing we want to talk to you about is understanding that nobody's journey is going to be the same and we want you to just focus on your own journey and your child's own journey. And also know that you don't have to have everything figured out right now. It can be so easy to, you know, look at other kids in your child's class. You know, I go in and do reading groups with, with kids and, you know, I'm reading with all of them. And there you can see in a second-grade class, like the different development of all these different kids in their reading. You know, some are like in second grade and like reading huge chapter books and others are really working on some basic words and basic sentences and there's like a huge variety. And just know that all of our kids blossom and grow in their own unique ways and try to just focus on where your child is right now and meet them where they are right now in their development. And we know, again, kids with ADHD are developmentally going to be behind their peers in their behavior and their emotion regulation and their ability to keep track of things with school. And just know that again, work on where your child is at, see them where they are at and those little wins, those little successes that they have, when they take one second to maybe take a deep breath that you've been working on for years, celebrate that win with them. It's just really important.

Mallory: And I love that you point out that parents also, you don't have to have everything figured out right now. And you just can't your child is going to learn and grow. Their needs are going to change. But I know that a lot of parents, especially after they've just gotten their

child's diagnosis, maybe if they've gotten a comprehensive evaluation, they have a long list of treatment and support options, and it can feel overwhelming. You want to do all the things to help your child, right? You want to, you know, now that you know that it's ADHD, you have the confirmation that that's what it is, you know, you can't wait for this next phase to start. You want to do all the things, and it's tempting to tempting to do that, but you don't have to have it all figured out right now. Give yourself time. Focus on one thing at a time. Chip away at those things as you go and as you learn more about what's working for your child and what's not working for your child. But, we know there can be this sense of urgency to get everything better all at once, but that's just not how it works. And that's going to set yourself up for, a lot of struggle, too. So give yourself permission to take it slower. You don't have to have it all figured out right now.

Lori: Yeah. And think about what is a priority for your family, what is important to your family and your goals, your child's goals, and focus on that one thing right now and some of those other things are just going to have to wait. I mean, again, I work with lots of families whose kids have really complex needs and a variety of diagnoses. It might be autism and ADHD and learning disorders, and it can feel like so much all at once. But I, when I sit down with families and we do that evaluation, it's we kind of say, here's a couple of things to do right now and start with. And we talk together about what that is based on what their priorities are as a family and what's most challenging to them in their lives. So again, it can feel really overwhelming, but make sure you take time. And it's, the other part of that is it's equally as important to focus on our kids' strengths. I mean, again, we focus so much on, like, what do we need to fix or work on that's a challenge, but sometimes that's at the expense of, you know, time that they're spending in soccer that they are like a rock star at, you know, or, spending time in music lessons because their, like, major interest or whatever. So it's equally as important to have that time where your child is like doing things that they love and that they excel at, and that's their strength as much as it is to kind of work on some of those things that are harder for them.

For my kids, the last thing they want to do when they get home from school is homework.

Katie: Totally! And the last thing I want to do after a long day of work is deal with the stress of meal planning, grocery shopping, cooking, and cleaning the kitchen.

Lori: Same here. We tried Hungryroot grocery service to help us eat balanced meals while saving time and money every week. It's been a game changer for our weekly meals and snacks, and I love that you can customize groceries based on your kids or your family's dietary restrictions.

Katie: Yes! My husband is gluten free and I love that I can customize groceries based my needs. Not only can I get complete meals delivered, but I can also order my weekly groceries through them. And I'm always amazed at how my kids will try new things when they come in our Hungryroot box.

Lori: It's easy to customize your box each week and you can skip weeks whenever you want. For a limited time, Hungryroot is offering our listeners 40% off your first box. Head to the show notes to grab our exclusive link and discount code.

Katie: 40% off and you feel great about feeding your family. Try Hungryroot today!

Mallory: One thing I hear from my friends is that their kids often think boring tasks like chores or homework are going to take forever, and in the same breath, their kids can play 2 hours of Minecraft and then complain that they just got started.

Katie: Okay, I think that friend you're referring to might actually be me.

Mallory: I'm not naming names. One tool we all love and have in our own homes is Time Timer.

Lori: At this point, I think we all have multiple Time Timers. For kids with ADHD, time can be a very abstract concept and Time Timer helps by making time more concrete. It helps kids visually see the passage of time.

Katie: And it can prevent those inevitable meltdowns when 2 hours of Minecraft just wasn't justification enough to ask your child to complete five minutes of chores.

Mallory: From homework, to chores, to screen time, to daily hygiene, to our own work, we love Time Timer because it is so versatile and their designs are cute too. A staple in our homes.

Lori: If you have a child with ADHD, we know you need a Time Timer and we have a discount code for you to use. So head to [timetimer.com](https://www.timetimer.com) and use the code: TCC to get the discount. You can also find the link and code in the show notes.

Mallory: So another thing, another message we want to leave you with, is that, especially if you're early on in this journey, maybe you're suspecting your child might have ADHD, the diagnosis is recent, having a diagnosis of ADHD does not change who your child is. Before and after the diagnosis, they are still their amazing, wonderful self. And we talk to parents all the time, pre diagnosis, who are really hesitant to go through the diagnostic process. They're concerned that putting a label on their child is going to change them. Like calling it ADHD or knowing that it's ADHD is going to change the child they love and know. But having a diagnosis doesn't change your child at all. It explains a lot, but it doesn't change your child. They're still their, wonderful, amazing, energetic self. A diagnosis doesn't change them. And on top of that, a diagnosis doesn't negate their strengths in any way at all. We know that ADHD kids have so many strengths. They're creative, they're energetic, they're spontaneous, they live in the moment. They are so funny, they have a great sense of humor, they have zest, they have charisma. Did you guys know that these days the kids, the kids are calling if you have charisma, they're saying you have the "rizz". They're calling it like the rizz. I think I'm using that right.

Katie: Okay, I'm officially so old because I have no idea about this language, this lingo.

Lori: Yeah, our kids are still a little too young, but my nieces and nephews are in high school and they're always like, you are so sus.

Katie: Yes! No, my daughter is ten and she'll totally say that. She'll say, that's sussy, mom. That's just sussy. And it's funny. So sus means, like, suspicious or suspect, for those of you who aren't up on the rizz and the lingo, but, obviously we're so helpful with this. But it's funny because I'll say, like, hey, after dinner, we need to put our laundry away. And she'll literally look at me and be like, that's so sussy. And I'm like, well, you're not even using that in the right context.

Lori: I can so picture her saying that too.

Katie: Yeah, can't you pic, like, all the tween attitude that one can muster!

Lori: Oh, my gosh. Your daughter, like, Katie's daughter has, like, the language. She's just very, like, advanced in her language and always has been.

Katie: It's what happens when your mom's a speech language pathologist. Poor thing!

Lori: So it's just really funny to think of her saying that.

Katie: I know. And she kind of talks a little bit like an adult. Like the other day she said, oh, that's, it's partly because she's reading the Nancy Drew books, but she said, oh, I just pity you. And I was like, we don't, please no, please don't tell anyone that you pity them. I was like, that's, I understand where you're going with this, but it sounds much worse than you meant it to be. So anyway, yes, the rizz, we're all up on our lingo, but I think bringing it back to what Mal was saying, those ADHD strengths really can shine. And it is really important for us as parents to focus in on those because it helps us. And it, and a lot of times it's going to be the lifesaver when we're looking and saying like, oh, I love how you did this. And that can be really helpful for our kids to hear that.

Mallory: Yeah, absolutely. Just reminding yourself of your child's strengths and then, of course, when you hear it from other people, that feels really good too, when other people notice your child's strengths. And, it reminded me of just the other day at the park, we were having a playdate with one of my son's really cute friends, and the mom said to me, it's gonna make me cry. She said, sorry, she said, "I love who my daughter is around your son. There's like no walls when she's around my son. She's just, like completely herself. She can be silly, she can be goofy, she can just, she, she puts herself out there in a way that maybe she's a little bit more reserved around other friends." But the mom told me that she just loves when she has playdates with us because she just notices that her daughter is just different in a great way. Like, it's just her true self. And so that meant a lot to me.

Katie: Yes, absolutely. I'm over here tearing up too. So if you cry, I cry.

Mallory: I'm the same way.

Katie: That's a beautiful story, Mal.

Mallory: It's when those moments come up, we know they don't happen all the time, but reminding yourself of those things, on the days that feel hard.

Lori: Yeah. And sometimes, and we know a lot of the feedback that you might be getting is the challenges that your child is having at school or with friends or whatever. And just remember, even if you're that person and you're that friend of another child, like, letting them know those strengths in their kids it literally means the world to them. So we want to speak to you right now and say we know your child is amazing, that those of you are listening, that they have amazing, unique qualities and just they can really shine when we speak to those and look at those and celebrate those.

Katie: It's so true. So we just wanted to leave you with our final reminder this season, and that is that good parents can have challenging kids. We talk to good parents, great parents every day who are doing every single thing within their power to support their kids. Whether that's advocating relentlessly, showing up even on the days when we just feel so depleted, but the most important thing for us to remember is that good parents can have challenging kids. And those challenging kids are also good and kind and so hardworking. And they are truly lucky to have you.

Thanks for listening to Shining with ADHD by your hosts, Lori, Katie, and Mallory of The Childhood Collective.

Mallory: If you enjoyed this episode, please leave us a review and hit subscribe so you can be the first to know when a new episode airs.

Lori: If you are looking for links and resources mentioned in this episode, you can always find those in the show notes. See you next time!