

Shining with ADHD by The Childhood Collective

Episode #173: Balancing Professional Knowledge and Real-Life Parenting

Katie: Hi, listeners. Today's episode is a little different. We have found a podcast we would love for you to check out and we are interviewing the host, Rachel Bozek.

Mallory: Rachel is the co-host of the podcast called In It: Raising Kids Who Learn Differently. It's a great resource for practical tips, helpful information, and boosting your confidence as a parent.

Katie: In each episode, you'll hear perspective, advice, stories from parents of children who have challenges with reading, math, focus and other learning differences like ADHD and dyslexia.

Mallory: We have been sharing their episodes with our community and the feedback has been great. Their topics include everything from hygiene to self-esteem.

Katie: Today's episode is a conversation between Rachel and our very own Mallory. As parents who truly are in it, Rachel and Mallory talk about balancing professional knowledge with actual real-life parenting. We are excited for you to check it out.

Mallory: To listen to In It, search for In It: Raising Kids Who Learn Differently in your podcast app. That's In It: Raising Kids Who Learn Differently.

Katie: Let's dive in!

Mallory: Hi, Rachel. I'm so excited that we're having this conversation today.

Rachel: Me too. It's so great to meet you.

Mallory: So great to meet you too. Well, Rachel, I think that what we're here to talk about is really important and I think that it might shed a little light for our parents on what's going on on this side of the mic. I was thinking about this conversation that we were going to have today, actually, when I was talking with a friend just yesterday. I feel like this happens a lot for me. I'll be talking with a friend, a lot of my friends have kids with ADHD, I'll be talking with a friend and I'll think, gosh, my listeners would really relate to this. Yeah, I've got to tell

this story or I have this personal story that I got to share. I know they're really going to relate to it.

Rachel: Yes, I definitely have had that experience and I also have kind of the flip experience where we'll be talking about something on the podcast and I'll be like, oh, I can think of like five people who I have to make sure hear about this conversation. So much of it is relatable and I've even found that so much of what we talk about, and I think this is the case on your podcast as well, can really apply to everybody. There is definitely specifics that we get into, you know, for addressing certain stumbling blocks that you run into at school and in family dynamics. But also a lot of it can be just kind of universally applied to, you know, kids growing up and parents learning how to do the parenting.

Mallory: I think you're right, because deep down as parents, we, we all have very similar goals, right. We want to feel like we're doing a good job parenting. We want to feel like we're meeting our child's needs. We want them to grow into amazing individuals. So, at the core, we all have the same goals for our kids, but when you're raising a child who thinks or learns differently, a child who has ADHD, you are encountering things different than maybe what your friends are experiencing if they're not raising a child who thinks or learns differently. And it can feel really isolating. And that's one of the reasons that I love coming on our podcast and sharing personal experiences, because I really want parents to know that they're not alone in a lot of this. That they're not the only parent who has had this struggle. Their child is not the only child who's ever had this struggle before. Because I think there's so much power in knowing that you aren't alone.

Rachel: Yeah, I totally agree. And I have, I've seen that just even in having conversations with teachers who will maybe reveal in the middle of a conversation where you're, especially if it's someone that you've just met, you know, it's like early in the school year and you're kind of like, I don't know if this person is going to get it or if they're going to get me or if they're going to get my kid. And then they're like, oh, actually, you know, my daughter has ADHD. And you realize that, you know, this is not always the case, but sometimes you're just like, oh, okay. And it's just like this sort of like wave of relief, like, okay, they're going to understand. And so that's, I think, helps a lot. And then I've also found that some, in some cases for teachers or people who kind of like need to know for whatever reason about your child, they're really curious and they're kind of like, oh, you can tell me about this. And

sometimes that's when the imposter syndrome sets in and I do the thing where I'm like, oh, actually I cohost a podcast about this. And then I'm like, oh, I shouldn't have told her that because now she's gonna think I like, really know stuff. But it definitely opens up the conversation and it makes it easier to talk about.

Mallory: Absolutely.

Rachel: And then there are also the experiences and we've talked about this a little bit on In It, like, that realization that there is also still a lot of learning for people to do out in the world and a lot of awareness. And sometimes it's generational, and sometimes it's just people don't know what they don't know. And so, I try to help them find out, but I think you guys do, too.

Mallory: Yep. One way that we try to show up for these families, these listeners who are raising kids who think and learn differently, is by sharing personal stories. When we do that, that's when we tend to get the most messages from people who are like, oh, my gosh, are you in my house? That's exactly what happened in my house this morning. Or like, one of you told a story about your school morning, that happened in my morning, too. Like, I'd say when we share experiences about what's going on in our lives, that is when we are flooded with messages from listeners who are like, you get it! That's what's happening for me, too. So that's something that we really love to do, is to share experiences, because, again, that gives families a sense of they're not alone. Other people are going through this, but, as podcast hosts, too, and we kind of toe this fine line of, wanting to share these experiences because we know they're really resonating with families, but also respecting our children's privacy and also keeping some of our lives private. And so, it's kind of this fine balance between, wanting, you know, both of us, we're in this business because we want to help families. We want to help parents, we want to help kids, and we know that this is helping them, but how do we safely divulge information, share stories, while respecting our family's privacy? I don't know if you've figured out the perfect formula for that.

Rachel: Well, one thing that has really been awesome that is, I think, just sort of a built-in part of what In It is and what it's all about is we interview experts all the time, and they often bring the examples to the table. And I do find just to what you just said, that happens to me all the time, where I'm like, wait, were you in my kitchen this morning? Like, that happens I feel like almost every time we record, to some extent, and sometimes I say that, and sometimes I keep it to myself, and it might depend on the nature of the example. But, yeah,

that walking that line is really important to me, and I think it's important to everybody. We've talked to, a lot of times we'll have people call in or share their own experiences and do it rather anonymously. Which makes sense. It doesn't matter who they are. There's someone that everybody else can relate to who's listening and that's really ultimately the point.

Mallory: Exactly. And I think that a question that I ask myself, and I know my cohosts Katie and Lori, we ask ourselves, what is the reason we're sharing this story? We're not really sharing our stories for the purpose of like venting or complaining. In some, it's cathartic in some ways, but I wouldn't call it, we're not getting on there to like, really complain and we're not speaking negatively about our children. We're not speaking negatively about our spouses or our child's school, but when we ask ourselves, should I share this personal story? We're usually selecting those stories that we're like, there's a really great lesson in this. Like, there's a really great message that can come from this story that we know people are going to relate to and it's a really great teaching moment.

Rachel: Yeah, I think that's really true.

Mallory: Do you ever felt like you've gotten into a situation where you have overshared, said too much?

Rachel: That's happened once in a while. But I have to say, like, we have a really great editor who's wonderful and, and very aware of, and kind of like plugged into any concerns like that. And also, I often find that, like, when I let it sit for a minute or like a day, I feel better about it, you know, than I really thought that I would. Sometimes it's just like an experience or an example of something that happened, like on vacation a few years ago and then when it happened, it was like, oh my God, I can't ever tell anyone about this. And then when you're kind of retelling the story, you know, like four years later, that's the, you know, where you say, like, someday this will be funny? That's the point when, okay, all right. This is okay.

Mallory: You know, I find myself using that coping thought all the time with my kids. The reminder, someday we're gonna laugh about this.

Rachel: Right.

Mallory: Someday at, your wedding, I'm gonna tell this story. Someday we'll laugh about this. I mean, I use that coping thought all the time. That's funny.

Rachel: And it is kind of a relief because then I'm like, oh, I guess I'm here now. I guess that thing is funny now because it was not funny when it happened.

Mallory: Yeah, it is nice to look back on those things and say, oh, I love that I can laugh about that now because that was really challenging in the moment. But I think I, I think a lot of our listeners can really appreciate what you were saying, kind of, you know, great editing on the back end. There probably are stories that we've all shared that in the end didn't make it to air, but I think that our listeners probably can, can respect that because I know a lot of them want the same for their kids. They want to respect their kid's privacy. I know this because even on our, on our social media channels, sometimes, you know, we'll ask people to comment your experience or like let us know if you want us to send you this guide and rather than like commenting on the actual post where other people could see it, they send us a message privately and are say, hey, I really would like that guide, I didn't want to comment on the post though, just in case someone I know saw it. So, I know that a lot of parents, a lot of our listeners out there are also testing out their comfort level and what they're, what they're putting into the world, the digital footprint they're leaving too for their kids.

Rachel: Yeah. As you said that, you know, people sometimes go behind the, the curtain to, to make a request. It reminded me of something that I've talked a little bit about, you know, on with the In It team is like that line between considering your family's privacy and being respectful of that and then also the idea of the stigma and making that go away. And I'm like, oh, am I contributing to that by not sharing? And it's like you have to also just, you know, find what you're comfortable with because we're just like humans trying to make an episode.

Mallory: Right.

Rachel: But I do think that that is something and that definitely crosses my mind a lot, you know, where it's like the greater good. And I think it is really important for people who don't get it going back to the like, do they get it or not? To it may help them get it a little bit more if we can talk about it a little bit openly. But at the same time, it's like, well, my kids have a comfort zone and that might not be where they are and so it's just always finding that balance.

Mallory: Yeah, yeah, that is a really great point you bring up. If there are things that we're not sharing, is that contributing to the stigma? Like why, like, if you're not sharing it, does that mean it's something to be ashamed of?

Rachel: Right. Or is it just a matter of privacy? And it sometimes it's one and sometimes it's the other.

Mallory: Yeah. A conversation that I have with a lot of my friends, it's funny we have this joke sometimes. They'll be like, well, what do you think, Mallory? Like, just asking as a friend. And then they'll be like, but what would Dr. Mallory say? What would Dr. Mallory tell me in this situation?

Rachel: And is the answer different?

Mallory: Sometimes it is. Honestly, Mallory's answers are a lot more down to earth and reasonable. Dr. Mallory sometimes is going to tell you what the evidence says and what you really should be doing. But as a parent who's in it, I have, like, a new respect for what is really reasonable for parents and what I can really expect them to try. So sometimes the answers are different. Yeah. And I think. I think back to baby Mallory in her 20's and 30's, when I was a practicing psychologist, still seeing patients before I had kids, and I laugh a little bit, I giggle a little bit about what I used to tell parents to do, because now, as a parent who's in it, I'm like, I would never, I wouldn't tell a parent that anymore. I wouldn't make that suggestion. Or I'd have, like, a lot of, like, disclaimers. If you're going to try this. I joke that, at that point, I had the book smarts, but I didn't have the street smarts. So now I got the book and the street smarts. And it definitely has, it definitely has changed the way that I am a professional, being a parent, being in it, I'm a different professional. And then, of course, my professional life has influenced my parenting as well. I'm not sure if you feel the same.

Rachel: Well, I was thinking about that because we had a guest on recently where we were talking about kind of like, best practices with, like, bribing and to try to get things to happen. We were talking about hygiene. And at the end of the day, I can't remember if this is exactly right, but I think it was basically like, should we offer a reward for, like, brushing teeth? And the cusp was basically like, please don't do that. And I was like, oh, I've never done that. And that's sort of like, yes, the best practice and the advice from a professional would be like, that is not a good road to go down for all of the reasons that we totally know it's a very slippery

slope when you start rewarding things that should just be happening. But then the reality is also like, I need my kid to brush their teeth. And I need that to that conversation to be over.

Mallory: Yeah.

Rachel: And so it is, I think that those two things kind of collide for me a lot because I know the answer, the like quote, right answer. But the reality is like, that doesn't mean that's what's happening in my house.

Mallory: You still gotta get out the door and get to school in the morning, right. Cause you gotta get to work and it can't be late again. Yeah. There's, it's, there's real life.

Rachel: Right. Well, I actually want to go back to your example of how Dr. Mallory might answer a question differently than how mom Mallory would. So, do you have any examples of a time where that has happened?

Mallory: Yeah. So, let's see. Thinking back to times where I kind of like cringe a little bit about what I maybe would have said before I was a parent, when I was, you know, seeing patients in therapy, I think that I probably had unrealistic expectations of parents when it comes to like, how much time they actually have or energy they actually have. And I would focus more on giving them things like the biggest bang for your buck. So, thinking about like, systems I would have put in place or routines I would have put in place, like, it's easy from an outsider's perspective, especially before you have kids, to be like, oh, here's the perfect schedule for you. If you just follow these steps, your child will be completely independent and you'll have your mornings back and you'll have hot coffee again, right. Now as a parent, I'm like, no, we need to figure out what is the bare minimum level of support that your child needs to have that successful morning.

Rachel: Right.

Mallory: So, I think that now as a parent in professionals, we just have a lot more realistic expectations of parents have a huge mental load. They're raising kids that think and learn differently. They're raising kids with ADHD. They're thinking about a lot. Their kids might be struggling at school school, they might be struggling with challenging behaviors at home. That's occupying a lot of their mind. Like, we really need to be mindful of like, how much

parents can take on and helping them do it bit by bit. Because we know what's evidence based, we know what strategies work, but how can we really make this practical for families with an eye towards these families are struggling in a lot of ways. They're overloaded in a lot of ways. So how can we give them the strategies that are going to make the biggest difference in their lives and kind of leave all the fluff out. Leave all the fluff out. What do we really need? What do I really need to know?

Rachel: So, this was so great. I'm so happy that we got to have this conversation today.

Mallory: Me too. I'm so glad that our listeners get to find out about In It.

Rachel: And I'm so glad that In It listeners are going to get maybe their first taste of Shining with ADHD today.

Katie: 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!