

Blog-a-thon Day #18

At our last team meeting we all agreed we wanted to address Kyle's noise level. While he does not have words, he has a great variety of sounds in a wide range of decibel levels. His volume is related to excitement, stress, sensory stimulation, joining within a conversation, and who knows what else.

As a team, we are working on teaching Kyle to quiet down in certain places and situations. I admit to not being sure he had that much control of himself. Therefore, I thought it was going to be pretty difficult to help him adjust his noise level.

We brainstormed and came up with a few strategies. Certain rooms of the house are quiet rooms and we all will talk quietly to him and ask him to be quieter in these rooms. Even if he just tones it down a few notches, that's a positive adjustment. We will really whoop it up and get loud in the loud rooms like his bedroom and downstairs TV room. We will help him stop and slow down in the community when he is loud and fast and ask him to quiet down before moving on. We will play with contrast especially in music therapy. Very loud /very soft. We have even cut the paper he likes to flap into squares so in the quiet areas, the paper is quiet. We will address sensory stimulation with gum and massage. These are just some of our starting points.

Kyle's response has been nothing short of miraculous. I am amazed at how much he has been able to control himself sometimes going from loud to completely silent. Or sometimes adjusting to a much softer voice. It is so beautiful to see Kyle learn right before our eyes. We've only been at it a week and everyone has reported similar results.

I believe I have not given Kyle enough credit in this area. Quieting his voice is not something we can prompt him to do. It has to come from him. We can ask, but ultimately he is in full control of that.

This takes a lot of mindful awareness on our part. And perseverance. Kyle's response has been

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Written by Gayle Nobel

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an unexpected bonus reward. Often it takes a very long time of trying for something before we see changes. I thought this would be much harder so I have been pleasantly encouraged and surprised. I am fully aware that Kyle has the option of not responding at all. And that happens too sometimes. But if we give it enough time, there has always been some kind of response.

And the life lesson is: point yourself in the direction of what you want, take action, adjust when necessary, and keep trying. Don't be thrown off course by lack of results. Appreciate small movements. Try as best you can not to decide ahead of time how the process will unfold. You'll be wrong anyway.

Quotacious:

"The brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something. Because the brick walls are there to stop the people who don't want it badly enough. They're there to stop the other people."

~~Randy Pausch, The Last Lecture

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