

Myths & Mindful Support

A Therapist's Guide to Understanding Autism and ADHD

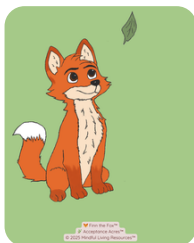
You're not failing. The old advice is.

Parenting a neurodivergent child can feel like walking a path filled with judgment, mixed advice, and silent worry. This guide will help clear the path with empathy, evidence, and practical tools. These pages were built from real therapy experiences, using ACT and mindfulness, not to fix your child, but to walk with them.

What's Inside:

- 4 common myths about autism & ADHD
- Therapist reframes* to challenge the myths
- Simple, proven tools you can try today
- Space to reflect on what works and doesn't work for *your* child

* Reframe = looking at something in a new way, especially if the old way is unhelpful, to explore the topic with more clarity, compassion, and calm.

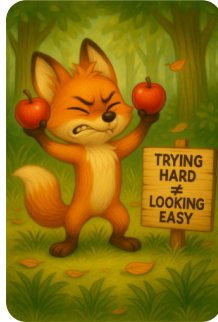


Compassionate tools to replace outdated
advice and help your child thrive.

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Myth 1:

“They’re just not trying hard enough.”



Reframe: "Effort looks different in every nervous system."

Try This:

- Break tasks into micro-steps
- Celebrate effort, not perfection
- Say: “That took focus. I noticed.”

Reflect Box: What does “effort” look like in your child?

Myth 2: “They need more discipline.”



Reframe: "They need structure, not shame."

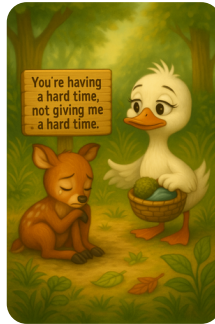
Try This:

- Create visual schedules
- Use choices to offer shared control
- Practice co-regulation, not consequences

Reflect Box: What routine helps your child feel safe?

Myth 3:

“They’re being manipulative.”



Reframe: "Many behaviors are regulation-seeking, not attention-seeking."

Try This:

- Say: “You’re having a hard time, not giving me a hard time.”
- Offer a sensory pause (fidget, stretch, step outside)
- Validate: “I see this is big for you.”

Reflect Box: When does your child struggle most?

Myth 4: “They’ll grow out of it.”



Reframe: "They'll grow with the right support."

Try This: (See page 6 for examples for * and **)

- Name their strengths openly
- Give tools for emotional language*
- Show them what progress can look like in their world**

Reflect Box: What's something your child has grown through recently?

Breaking Down Helpful Examples

***Give Tools for Emotional Language**

(Help your child recognize and name their feelings with support.)

1. Use a feelings chart:

- Let your child point to “frustrated,” “silly,” or “tired” instead of having to say it aloud.

2. Offer sentence starters:

- “I feel ____ because ____.”
- “Right now, my body feels like a ____ (volcano, turtle, cloud).”

3. Model labeling emotions in everyday moments:

- “You were jumping around so much—I wonder if you were feeling excited or restless?”

****Show Them What Progress Looks Like in Their World**

(Celebrate effort in ways that make sense to them, not just to adults.)

1. Compare to a previous challenge they’ve improved on:

- “Last time getting ready took 30 minutes and today it only took 15. That’s progress!”

2. Use a visual tracker or sticker system:

- Mark each day they tried something hard (even if it didn’t go perfectly).

3. Point out micro-wins:

- “You paused and asked for help instead of yelling. That’s huge.”

A Closing Thought

You're not alone on this trail.

This work is hard—and it's sacred. You're not fixing a broken child. You're supporting a child with a beautifully wired brain, who's learning how to live in a world that doesn't always understand them.

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