



SMS Behavior
The Must-Know Basics



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Positive Behavior Traits

- Helpful and eager to please
- Affectionate
- Excellent long term memory for names, places, events
- Great sense of humor

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- Great sense of humor
- Endearing/appealing personalities

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EXPLOSIVE OUTBURSTS

Self-Abuse

Controlling Behavior

Perseveration

Aggression

TANTRUMS

Attention Seeking


Hyper-reactivity



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Children with SMS want to have good behavior!

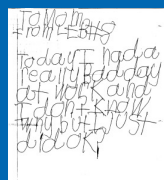





Children do what if they can. If they can't, we need to figure out why, so we can help." Ross W. Greene, [The Emotionally Disabled Child](#)



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Common Misunderstandings

Bad Kids
Our children are *unable* to act badly. They are misbehaving to get back at us for something.

Bad Parents
Inconsistent or poor parenting causes the behaviors. We *SHOULD* be able to control our child's behavior.


Poor Discipline
More consistent applications of rewards and punishments would cure them. The child simply needs to understand "who is boss," and then he will behave.

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So What Do We Do?

Do What Works!




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Use Good Parenting Skills




- Speak at child's level
- 1 command at a time
- Have a plan, and a backup plan
- Pinpoint high risk situations and prepare child for them
- Be as consistent as you can (no one is perfect)
- Help child understand that you are the authority (not harshly)
- Give choices



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Two Parenting Styles That Make Things Worse



Pushover-give in to everything



My way or the highway



←————→



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Set up an SMS-friendly Environment



- Caregivers are not too rigid
- SMS-proof
- Plan rules/expectations around the child's developmental and emotional age
- Consider their language level
- Use visuals
- Utilize Routines

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Teach, Don't Expect



- Set the bar low at first
- Explain, draw, demonstrate what you want, and help her practice
- Reward all good **ATTEMPTS**
 - "You look very angry right now, but you're doing a good job of staying in control!"
 - "You were trying your best - great job!"
- Encourage the discouraged
 - "You almost did it!"

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Choose your Battles

- What are the misbehaviors?
- Which are most important?
- Can they be changed at this time? (Is the child capable of controlling them?)
- What are the possible causes, and could those causes be fixed?
- Is it really destructive, or just annoying?


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A Common Question Asked By Teachers And Others : Why can't they just behave? They are smart enough!





Yes they are smart...they learn some things quite quickly, often have great skill or knowledge on their favorite topics, and are great with computers and other electronics

However...



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... it's very hard for them. And most people don't understand that.






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They Are Emotionally Immature

"The behavioral reactions of people with SMS often seem like those of a very young child, regardless of the age or intellectual level of the person. Parents often report that they feel (as they are "walking on eggshells", sensing that their child is smoldering under the surface and ready to erupt into a major outburst at the least provocation.

Brandy Duncan, "Embracing the Inner Toddler in People with Smith-Magenis Syndrome"






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Similarities to Toddlers

- A low tolerance for frustration
- Negativity
- Mood swings
- A need to do things for themselves
- Short attention span
- Tantrums
- Separation anxiety
- Resistance to changes in routine
- Repeated (unrelenting) questioning

Brandy Duncan, "Embracing the Inner Toddler in People with Smith-Magenis Syndrome"






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What makes SMS behavior so hard?

Nobody in the house is getting any sleep

Intensity





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ANXIETY & ADRENALINE

ABA:
Antecedent...what happens before the behavior (assumed Cause)
Behavior
Consequence...what happens after to encourage or discourage the behavior.

I believe that with SMS there are two more A's.
Anxiety, Antecedent, Adrenaline, Behavior, Consequence.



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Adrenaline Surges: Fight or Flight

If a person with SMS gets really mad or scared, her adrenaline will surge and the following can happen:

- Behavioral meltdowns** and meltdowns
- Behaviors** that isn't deterred by threats or punishment
- Impulsivity/Aggression**
- Repetitiveness** (insisting on doing things her way or the way it's usually done)

If they get really excited and happy you may see:

- Impulsivity** and impulsivity
- Jumping up and down, clapping, making a noise and face**
- Laughing out loud**






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You have to try to Keep a Lid on It!

Help them stay in control

- SMS causes many behaviors that are difficult to control.
- All of us feel "out of control" at times, but people with SMS have to cope with so many tough situations. Wouldn't you be tempted to boil over?

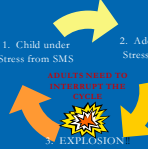




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Break the Vicious Cycle

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What Can You Do to Keep a Lid on It?



- Realize that SMS behaviors are often out of the child's control.
- Be calm (or at least "act" calm) they need to "borrow your calm"
- Don't force them... don't make ultimatums unless it is a safety issue or vitally important.
- Give them control of something, anything, whenever you can.

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Prevention: "Only You Can Prevent SMS Fires"... Your Child Can't!

- Change something to reduce the stress.
- Stop, Breathe, and Get Control. (of yourself)
- Do something to slow down or eliminate the "fight or flight" adrenaline.

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Flame Reducers




Distraction: whisper, surprise them, point out the window, sing your instructions, change the subject, change your voice, humor, request their help, send them on an errand, interest them in something else...**SN, HEAT TO HELP**

Reassurance and Soothers

Be Positive: Give choices, give them some freedom and control, write or draw what you need to say, make them think something is their idea...


<https://www.prisms.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/mom/Tip-and-Tricks.pdf>




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Resources

<https://www.prisms.org/about/sms/living-with-sms/behavior/>




Written by a wonderful Mom, Bev Frey



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"If you want them to control and change their behavior...
you may first have to change your own behavior."


Ross Greene, *The Explosive Child*



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Inflexibility (In children)
 +
 Inflexibility (In adults)
 =
MELTDOWN!!!

Ross Greene, *The Explosive Child*, p. 104



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Who wins in a power struggle?

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Ideas for Big Meltdowns
The goal should be to keep the meltdown quiet, keep everyone safe, and do what works!


<p>Don't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact • Threaten • React - <small>to their words or demands trying to get things done</small> • Assume - <small>that the child is doing things on purpose</small> • Expect - <small>child to be able to reason</small> • Worry - <small>about getting into a "mess"</small> • Punish - <small>in response to what happens during the meltdown</small> 	<p>Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent! <small>(the best intervention)</small> • Distract • Control - <small>your own voice and body language</small> • Give them some space • Move them! <small>(if you can safely, and without increasing their anger)</small> • Praise - <small>any attempt at controlling themselves</small> • Wait calmly
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Stop, Breathe, and Stay in Control!!!





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Remember- You and your student are a team.

Stay on the child's team.

We can help them behave better by changing our own behavior.

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My daughter Laura's advice when I asked her what she would like for people to know about SMS and behavior.






"Just tell them Matthew 7:12, Mom"

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."



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