

Dr. Kelli's Parent and Teacher Corner

As an expert on healthy relationships with children who is also a mother and an educator, I am always on the lookout for creative, fun ways to engage children. I was thrilled to meet StinkyKids' creator Britt Menzies and learn about her adorable "Leaders Of Good." StinkyKids stories involve learning through social interaction, creating many opportunities for growth in social development.

StinkyKids® and the Runaway Scissors is a perfect story to engage children in dialogue about making good choices, asking for help when we need it, and taking responsibility for our actions. This story resonates with me personally because I have two little boys that have cut each other's hair – twice. *StinkyKids® and the Runaway Scissors* is refreshing because it shows children that it is okay to make mistakes and demonstrates having the courage to own up to those mistakes. Lastly, it intentionally ends with a question designed to foster ideas from children, sparking interaction between adult and child. We can learn a great deal from our children if we follow their lead and let them express themselves!

Using this Story as a Teaching Tool

It is never too early to start having conversations with children about the things we believe are important. *StinkyKids® and the Runaway Scissors* is a great story to inspire such conversations. An example of a conversation you may have with your children after reading this book is to talk about what you expect them to do if these things ever happen to them. Remember to use statements or open-ended questions to get the most out of your conversations. Here are some topics you and your little stinkers can discuss:

- Oh, no! What could Britt have done to get help?
- I wonder what would happen if you got gum in your hair? What if you were on a play date?
- Scissors in our house/school are not for cutting hair. What do we use scissors for at our house?
- Tell me about a time when you laughed really hard with friends and family.
- What did you notice about the dog?
- How do you look when you are happy? Sad? Proud? Silly? Shocked?
- How would you make a friend feel better?
- What is a secret? When shouldn't you keep a secret?
- What ideas do you have about helping clean up the mess?
- What does it mean to "Always Be A Leader Of Good"?

Suggestions to Further Engage Children

Play is the natural language of children. In addition, children who engage in playtime after a story are more likely to integrate the information and enhance relationships with their parents/teacher/etc. So, in addition to having a discussion about “What do you think happened next?”, you may wish to try some focused playtime using toys to let your children express their ideas about the StinkyKids situation.

Takeaway Messages

StinkyKids helps establish and strengthen important messages such as: courage, leadership, making good choices, friendships, self respect, and becoming “Leaders Of Good.” Below is a list of takeaway messages from *StinkyKids® and the Runaway Scissors*. Enjoy sharing them with your little stinkers!

- Always ask for help when you need it.
- Parents were kids once and understand childhood mistakes.
- Take responsibility for your actions.
- Clean up your mess.
- Learn from your mistakes.
- Do not go to sleep with gum in your mouth!
- “Always Be A Leader Of Good!”

Dr. Kelli

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