

# Dr. Kelli's Parent and Teacher Corner

As a mother, educator, and child/family relationship expert, 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® See a Full Moon* is a perfect story to engage children in dialogue about making good choices, respecting others, and taking responsibility for our actions. This story resonates with me personally because as we with children all know, evening playdates are especially unique. Just like the little stinkers in the story, my own kids are, as Trey put it, "even crazier" during nighttime playdates. *StinkyKids® See a Full Moon* is refreshing because it demonstrates that it is okay for children to be children. We were once just like them – exploring, learning, making lasting friendships. At the same time, the story teaches kids that sometimes fun can go too far and we need to learn to manage our behavior.

As in all of the StinkyKids books, *StinkyKids® See a Full Moon* 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® See a Full Moon* is a great story to inspire such conversations. An important concept that is expressed in this story is for parents to help kids learn appropriate limits. Trey's parents had to set some limits with the StinkyKids during their nighttime playdate. An effective tool that I teach parents and teachers when setting limits with children involves a four-step process:

- First start with an empathy statement, you will get more cooperation from children. An empathy statement might be "You're having so much fun with that toy" or "You are really enjoying your friends."
- Next, set the limit in a neutral tone and avoid using "no." You might say, "But it's not okay to throw balls in the house."
- Third, give one to three choices. Giving children choices after you've stated a limit will help them have a sense of control. You can say, "You can throw the ball outside, or chose to play an inside game."
- Finally, restate the limit in the same neutral tone you used before. Continuing with the example here you would say, "But the ball is not for throwing inside."

In addition, the end of this story would be a great time to discuss what we as the adults expect from our children. Let them come up with ideas for “WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED NEXT?” Here are some topics you and your little stinkers can discuss:

- Do you like to play hide-n-seek? Where is your favorite place to hide?
- Have you ever seen a full moon? Describe what you saw and how it made you feel.
- Can you give some examples of outdoor fun vs. indoor fun?
- Do you think Hannah did the right thing by using her words to express how she felt? What words would you use to describe your feelings?
- How do you look when you are happy? Sad? Proud? Silly? Shocked?
- Do you have a favorite joke? Can you share your joke with me?
- How would you make a friend feel better?
- What did you notice about the parrot?
- What does it mean to “Always Be A Leader Of Good”?

## Suggestions to Further Engage Children

Play is the natural language of children, and certainly the most helpful way we have to understand a child’s world. Allowing your child to have free play will help her or him to make sense what she or he is learning and the world around them. In addition, children who engage in playtime after a story are more likely to integrate the information and enhance relationships with their parents/teachers/etc. Try some focused playtime using toys, StinkyKids dolls, and/or other fun items, 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, friendship, respect, and becoming “Leaders of Good.” Below is a list of takeaway messages from *StinkyKids® See a Full Moon*. Enjoy sharing these with your little stinkers!

- Keep outside fun outside – learn limits
- Always help each other out (work as a team)
- Take responsibility for your actions
- Clean up your mess
- Learn from your mistakes
- Be kind and respectful to others

and...

“Always Be A Leader of Good”

*Dr. Kelli*

Kelli B. Ritter, Ph.D.



Kelli B. Ritter, Ph.D. is the founder and president of Effective Parenting, LLC in Atlanta, Georgia, and author of *Come Play with Me!*, a guide to using play skills to enhance relationships with children. For more ideas on using play or for information on Dr. Ritter, please visit [www.effectiveparentingllc.com](http://www.effectiveparentingllc.com).