

## Is Your Child Explosive?

**Is your child Defiant? Angry? Aggressive? Willful? Challenging?**

**Has your child been diagnosed with Conduct Disorder? Oppositional Defiant Disorder? Intermittent Explosive Disorder?**

**Do you and your child seem to be trapped in a pattern of negative interaction?**

**It is time to go to PLAN B!**

Plan A was you asking your child to do something or making some form of a request. Your child refuses. You insist your child does what he/she is told. Your child continues to refuse. You get angry and insist LOUDER. Your child gets LOUDER. You and your child keep going round and round until things get really ugly! Plan A is not working, right? Have you tried skipping to plan C? Plan C is when you quit asking your child to do things simply to avoid having a fight. This is not fair to you or your child.

What is plan B?

1. Look at the circumstances under which your child becomes explosive. Can you begin to see that these circumstances are predictable?
2. Think of plan B as how you and your child are going to solve this problem before it starts.
3. Practice EMPATHY

Empathy means letting your child know how s/he feels. This does not mean you are giving into your child. It just means that you are allowing your child an opportunity to share with you the feelings behind his/her refusal to cooperate.

Example:      Child:            "I'm not doing my homework!  
                  Parent:            "What's up?" (In a calm, supportive tone)  
                  Child:              "I'm just not".  
                  Parent:              "I didn't like to do my homework when I was a kid either. It would be a lot more fun to go out and play".  
                  Child:              "It's too hard"  
                  Parent:              "Yes, it is hard. What would help?"

4. Define the Problem. Now it is your turn to express your concern about the problem, but in a supportive way. Start by restating your child's concern. In this example, s/he feels the work is too hard. Tell your child again you understand the frustration. Then explain *how you want your child to do the homework because you want to see your child succeed. It feels good to get good grades.*
5. Next, invite your child to work with you to figure out a solution. "Let's think about how we can work this out". Take your child's suggestions seriously, even if you strongly disagree. Listen. Be respectful, not demanding. Be supportive, not critical. If your child has solutions that you know won't work, say, "I am so proud of you for trying to think of a solution. I'm not sure that would work though because...." Then give your suggestions. Offer choices.

**Taken from:** Greene, R.W. & Ablon, J.S. (2006). *Treating explosive kids: The collaborative problem-solving approach.* New York: The Guilford Press.