Lazy but Smart Kids? Why Bright Children Struggle More Than You Think Transcript

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Why Bright Kids Seem Lazy

If you have a bright child who won't start, won t try, or does the bare minimum, you've probably asked yourself, why are they so smart, but acting so lazy?

Here's the truth no one is telling parents. Laziness isn't a personality trait, it's a dysregulated nervous system paired with an overwhelmed executive functioning system.

Here's the most important part. It can regulate, and today I'm going to show you why intelligent kids struggle the least and the simple shifts that finally help them succeed without constant battles.

And by the end, you're never going look at laziness the same way. When parents say a child seems lazy, what they usually mean is this, they don't start tasks, They give up quickly, avoid anything hard, procrastinate, just do enough to get by.

And that's when meltdowns happen and expectations seem to rise. They seem unmotivated despite high ability. But here's the real issue. Your child isn't avoiding work, they're avoiding dysregulation and the feeling of it because work requires planning.

Problem solving, emotional tolerance, frustration tolerance. Sustained effort, shifting between steps. And when your nervous system is overwhelmed or under stimulated, those skills go offline.

What Laziness Really Looks Like

And what looks like lazy is actually a brain that can't access effort. And that's different than what you think. So what's the science behind laziness?

There are three neurological patterns I've seen in the over 10,000 brain maps I have done. Number one, underactive prefrontal cortex. That's executive functioning center.

When it's underpowered, kids really struggle to initiate those tasks, stay organized, break work into steps, push through discomfort. They're not choosing avoidance.

Their brain is missing the go signal, and there's a difference. Number two, we see an overactive emotional center. These kids feel failure deeply. Every mistake is a catastrophe.

They're protecting itself. Number three, we see low mental energy or cognitive fatigue. Why kids burn through energy fast? Because their brains work harder behind the scenes.

By the time homework or tasks that are harder for them, they're depleted. A mom came to me about her son, Leo.

Brain Patterns Behind Avoidance

He was a straight A thinker, but a strait A F worker. She said to him, he can explain everything perfectly, But he won't write one darn sentence. he avoided anything that was hard writing, multi-step work, anything unclear, right?

And new tasks. And on the outside, he didn't just look avoidant. He looked lazy. But when I brain mapped him, He had a very underactive frontal lobe and overactive emotional centers.

His communication pathways were overloaded. The brain map was clear. he was avoiding overwhelm. And once we focused on regulating his nervous system, breaking tasks down, but teaching him to work backwards, we taught

those executive functioning skills.

What happened was he became more available cognitively, and there was a difference. We didn't make things easier, or we just changed how we were teaching.

He just didn t see because he had such weak executive functioning skills, he wasn't thinking with the end in mind. And that's what I teach a lot. You can look at my EF Toolkit teaches this really quite beautifully.

Go to DrRoseanne.com EFToolkit. He and his mom and dad and grandparents really started to see Leo really wasn' doing this on purpose. He wasn't lazy. And we often put these labels on these kids and then kids start believing them.

Leou2019s Story and Brain-Based Support

We start believe in them and I was so glad that they came to me and we were able to actually look at his brain, but you don't always need a brain map.

I'm sharing that information with you here so that you can start rethinking and changing how you are interacting with your child because you have the parenting power and I show you how to do that.

And if you want more support on how help your child, you can just go to Taker Solution Matcher, DrRosanne.com, port slash help. It's actually going to really tell you about your children's brain patterning and what's the best.

path for them so that you don't have to look everywhere and try to guess and Google search, which is probably how you found me. And I'm glad you're here, but I really want you to have a path that's doable.

That's what all of the things that I am doing, including my new book. By the time this comes out, you'll know the name and all the things that I'm doing, including our comms parenting certification.

We have a lot of exciting things happening this year so that we can make parenting just so much better for you and your kid. I want you to think my kid's not lazy.

The child is just stuck and stuck kids don't need pressure. What they need more of is regulation, structure, and a way to do a task without panic. Laziness is a label we use when we don't understand the nervous system.

What are some of the real reasons bright kids struggle? Their brains work fast until it doesn't. It's working really fast and then it hates when things are slow.

Number two, perfectionism. Smart kids are belabored by perfectionism. I can't believe all these like fancy smancy MDs I hang out with. They don't get anything done because they got the perfectionist thing and it's just holding them back.

If something's not perfect, They have a lot of discomfort and they don't want to complete their work. It's a major problem for really bright kids. We don' want perfectionism.

I scream from the rooftop for people who feel that they have to be perfect. Man, they haven't inner critic. And maybe you need to look at yourself and mom and dad and grandparent, not an uncle.

Maybe you're setting that tone for perfection.

Perfectionism, Shame, and Executive Function

Ism I purposely try to mess up in front of my kids? but I do it all the time. And it's a good thing to let people know around you, you don't have to be perfect.

It's terrible affliction that will haunt you until adulthood and you'll have go to therapy on it. So let's just stop that now. Perfectionism definitely for me is the number one driver of avoidance for really bright kids.

Number three, these kids lack executive functioning skills that bridge them from their brilliant ideas to action. I'm a GSD girl, get stuff done. Okay, and you have to be bright enough to have the action and then skilled enough.

To have learned those things to put into play to actually do that. Intelligence does not equal task initiation. This is a hard pill to swallow. When I used to do all those neuropsych tests, all the first words out of everybody's mouth was, my kid's so bright, but they don't get anything done.

Those are separate skills, task initiation, executive functioning. Remember, you're not born with that. Yes, some people are more innate because they're regulated.

But these are skills that you can learn, okay? And that's really important. Number four, they're exhausted for masking all day. So school drains the cognitive battery.

I mean, when I was in, did I go to kindergarten? Yes, I didn't go preschool. K through 12th grade, all this bored out of my damn mind. It was like, oh my God, it can't even imagine.

Was a different time and we were allowed to be more free in the eighties. Today, these bright kids, it's like, take this course, do this, and do more work.

That's not really stimulating for a really bright kid. And so they shut down. So just remember that. Number five, kids feel shame when they can't meet expectations, effort faster than anything.

Like, yes, perfectionism is a bad thing, but usually right behind it is shame. I didn't do it perfectly, now I'm ashamed. And this isn't a kid problem, it's a capacity problem.

So if our nervous system isn' regulating, we don't have the space to get through hard things, do executive functioning, find where I have to start this task or see it through, or again, in executive function, seeing the end results.

So what do we do? What's practical? what's simple? Number one, you know what I'm going to tell you. Regulate first.

Practical Strategies to Get Kids Moving

Before demanding effort, regulate. A dysregulated brain can't start anything. Number two, You're going use that backward planning. I talk all about this in my executive functioning toolkit.

Talk about my other executive function episodes. But you got to always start with the end in mind. You think that everyone understands that. What does that finished product look like?

What is that thing your kid wants to do? And then work through the steps. That's what executive functioning is. And clarity reduces that overwhelm, and we are teaching executive-functioning skills that they will use for the rest of their lives and teach it to their kids too, or use it at work and have it in their relationships.

Because laziness is really about not seeing that end result. And kids often just shut down. Number three, we're going to lower the first step. That just means a smaller entry point.

We make it easier to begin. That's important and show them how to do that. So four, we're going to externalize the steps visually. And if you can kinesthetically, so particularly our neurodivergent learners, they learn visually and kinetetically.

They don't learn auditorily. It's pretty, pretty rare. where you're primarily taking things in through listening. So we

can show people, we could use a mind map, We can ask them to sketch it out.

We don't have to add all the words, but smart kids get stuck in their heads. They get in the thinking. And then again, brightness doesn't mean task initiation.

Let's make that bridge. Number five, don't make things easier, okay? Don't dump down the work, show them the path and reinforce effort. And that's what that working backwards is all about.

Show them how other people are doing it, that what scoring rubrics are about, hopefully they're showing them an end result. We have to get them to see the done.

If they are not seeing the don, then they don t know which path. So your intelligent child isn't thriving. It's not because they're lazy, it's because their nervous system and executive functioning aren't synced up.

And this is something you can support. When you regulate the brain and support the skills that bridge the thinking and the doing, they finally step into their potential that you've always seen.

If you want to understand exactly what's blocking your child's motivation, their follow through, take the Solution Matcher.

Final Takeaways and Resources

it identifies the nervous behind laziness so you know exactly what to do and what your child needs. Next, you can go to drrosanne.com forward slash help and take that solution matcher.

And I hope this was really helpful. I don't want to hear the word lazy ever again. Now, it's a dysregulated avoidant brain and you what steps to take.

Please let me know how this is helping you, whether you're emailing me or you are on YouTube. Drop it in here. I get so many awesome emails and comments from you and I really appreciate it.

And if there's something else you want to hear about, please let me know because I love to give you more support in areas that you need because guess what?

From one parent to another, we need to lift each other up. Want more insights and solutions? Well, subscribe to our Disregulation Insider and it will show up in your inbox every week.