



March Forth Family



Happy Moms— Peaceful Homes



3 Tips to Survive Overactive Children

By Julie Meekins

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Introduction

Having raised a special needs child (CHARGE Syndrome) and another child with learning disabilities (dyslexia, dysgraphia, ADD and ADHD) as well as two typically developing children, Julie knows how incredibly important support is for families.

This book was put together with YOU Mom and YOU -- person who works with children-- in mind. May it bring you another measure of support along your journey.

If you are the mother of an overactive preschooler, elementary-aged child, middle-schooler, or high-schooler...

If you are a homeschooling family or if your children are in private or public school or preschool...

If you are an adoptive parent or a brand new mommy...

If you work with or care for any of the above...

This book is for you!

It is my intention that each one of you takes away something that will make a difference in your life and in the lives of the children you may have the privilege to influence.

Are you ready for change? Are you ready to put things into place to bring peace back into the home?

You have delightful children. You love your children. You want them to BE children and to DO childish things and have a HAPPY childhood. But you also want a peaceful home. You can have both!!! I am excited about the things I have to share with you because I know they make a difference.

Through the years I have accumulated lots and lots of wonderful ideas and it is my privilege to share three life-changing ones that have made a huge difference in our life here in our family and in the lives of countless other families with whom I have worked. These tips are very practical and tried and true and can make a huge difference in your day to day life.

So here we go!



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I guess the main question here is what is causing our children to be overactive? I will suggest three very good possibilities for the cause of hyperactivity.

First: Could it be that your child does not know where their body is in time and space? Tip #1 will explain how this may affect the activity of your child.

Second: Could it be that the child needs to be trained to sit quietly and play? Tip # 2 will cover this struggle.

And Third: Could it be all about the food they are eating and what is in it? With Tip #3 we will explore some ideas around food and its association with hyperactivity.

At March Forth Family we are all about getting to the root cause of a thing.

So, let's explore:

TIP #1:

Train the brain to know where the body is in time and space.

Some of you have children who seem to zip through life. Everything is fast, fast, fast. They often leave skid marks on the kitchen floor or down the hallway. These kiddos sometimes hug a little too tightly and knock things about when they pass. Anybody got one of those? Does the word “whirlwind” come to mind?

These children do not know where their body is in time and space. I have just the thing that can help. You want their brain to wake up to feel things more appropriately. How do you do that? It is about getting **specific** stimulation to the brain. Note that I wrote “specific” not random. There is a great deal of random stimulation (overkill) in our world today; all that does is confuse things.

The moms who work with us at March Forth Family are so happy when we recommend specific activities to do with their child daily to make a difference in their development. For example, with children who are hyperactive, the brain needs specific stimulation to help it know where the body is in time and space. Does your child have a low frustration level? Proprioception could be a large part of the problem. Proprio...what? Proprioception – which American Heritage Medical Dictionary defines as: The unconscious perception of movement and spatial orientation arising from stimuli within the body itself.



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So, what do we do about it? Here are a few practical tried and true ideas:

- Every day for about five minutes at a time, several times a day, give your child arm and leg squeezes. Deeply massage all four limbs several times a day and it will give signals to the brain that will enable the child to know where his or her body is in time and space. We did this activity with our children. Our hyperactive child began to settle down and now is no longer hyperactive. Squeeze just below the pain threshold. You don't want it to hurt but you want them to feel it and every child is different in how they feel it. So you will have to experiment with your child.

Most children LOVE this activity. Some children have to get used to it at first but then they begin to request their squeazy time and look forward to it.

- Another way to get this information to the brain is trunk to trunk bear hugs seven times a day. You grab your child as they walk by and just love on them.

Do you have a bedwetter? These activities helped us to eliminate bedwetting for one of our children who was about ten years old at the time. Yep! And it happened within two weeks. Every night my husband, Tom, applied arm and leg squeezes for about five minutes and within two weeks, the bedwetting was gone -- never to return.

Do you know someone who doesn't understand personal space? They are the folks that stand a little too close for personal comfort. These activities can also help to train the brain to avoid that social annoyance.

Now I have to say that every child is different and it may not happen as quickly for your child or it may even happen more quickly, but I do know this -- when you do arm and leg squeezes, you are opening new pathways in the brain and giving every opportunity for the connection to take place. The function does not change until the connection takes place so the important thing is to not stop short. This DOES work and does amazing things for your child's brain. Don't give up. Keep going.

When a child comes to see me who walks like a herd of elephants and can hardly find the chair because he doesn't know where the floor is or where the chair is and his parents start doing these activities with him and open up those pathways in the brain -- it is so rewarding to watch the awareness take place over time. It is life-changing for the child and brings more peace into the family.



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- Let me give you one more idea: the weighted lap pad or weighted blanket. You can make your own or you can order them.

If you are creative and industrious and want to make your own, a wonderful mother of a child with proprioception struggles was so very generous to share these tips with me for YOU! (Thank you J.J.!)

<http://craftnectar.com/2009/09/03/calming-the-senses-with-weighted-blankets/>

<http://www.dauidsblanket.com/downloads/Weighted-Blanket-or-Lap-Pad-Instructions.pdf>

<http://www.dauidsblanket.com/2009/04/free-pattern-for-weighted-blanket-or-lap-pad/>

If you want to order one check out:

Dreamcatchers: <http://www.weightedblanket.net/>

Weighted lap pads and blankets have many therapeutic benefits and can work wonders in opening up those pathways in the brain and can lead to totally new functions for the rest of life. You can read about amazing benefits on the Dreamcatchers website.

In my practice, I talk to moms all the time who are going crazy with road runner children racing everywhere. If you are one of those moms with racers in your house, I feel you.

Do the squeezes and the bear hugs consistently, think about getting or making a weighted lap pad or blanket and over time brain connections will be made and your child will be calmer. I know -- I had a road runner.

Most kids LOVE these activities because they really do not want to be crazy hyper. Some of them feel like they are floating around all day long -- similar to people who are out in space with no gravity. That is why they literally flit from one place to another. To have a way to come down to earth is so freeing, so comforting to them that they just relish the opportunity.

By the way, everything I share with you -- I have implemented with my own children and can attest to every activity making a huge difference.



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So, to recap: Tip #1 is train the brain with trunk to trunk bear hugs and arm and leg squeezes to help your child navigate his world without his current craziness and to consider a weighted blanket or lap pad. Who knew that one could make such a big difference in the craziness of your home by doing bear hugs, limb squeezes and using weighted blankets? These are very simple things to apply for amazing results.

Remember to be patient with the process because every child is different in terms of when you will see the changes taking place. Do not sell yourself short. Don't hesitate to get support in the process. Grab another mom with children who also need these activities and hold each other accountable. Also remember we at March Forth Family are always ready to bring you into our community of client support and work individually with you and your child.

If you want to know what programs we are currently running, check them out at the left side bar and the Events section of the website: www.marchforthfamily.com

Are you ready for Tip #2?



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TIP #2:

Schedule quiet moments and train your child to adhere to them.

Now, some of you are saying, “yeah, right”. My child just goes and goes and goes until she totally runs out of steam and then she crashes. There is no in between.

I had one of those children. She was amazing. She was full speed ahead and then...nothing; completely and soundly asleep.

The first and very important step in this tip is to get a minute timer. The timer is your friend. If you have a child who is perpetually hyperactive, training them to sit quietly or play quietly will take dedication on your part BUT it is definitely doable. I have seen the “after” many times and it is glorious.

I suggest that you first determine what it is you want them to do. Do you want them to rest in their bedrooms? Do you want them to sit at a table and play quietly? Do you want them to sit quietly on the floor looking at books?

Once you determine what it is you want them to do and the location in which you want them to do it, you need to communicate it very clearly to your child.

For example, if you have a three year old who constantly crashes the block town, Lego city or meticulously set up doll house of his older brothers and sisters, your goal may be to have the three year playing quietly elsewhere. But, you are thinking, there is no way he is going to sit still that long. He can be taught with the timer and loving firmness from you. Trust me. It really can be done with even the most challenging child!

Let me step back a minute. The first step really is believing in the possibility of you being able to pull this off. Our own mindset is critically important in moving us and our children forward. I believe in you, Mom. You can do this. Think of me cheering on the sidelines as you take each action step. Consistency and persistent input takes patience but it is so worth it in the end when your child is happily playing quietly and your home is the peaceful haven you so desire.



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Let's get going: the first day you say to your child "I want you to sit here at the table and play with healthy homemade play dough for one minute. (Healthy because remember, I am also a health coach :)

Some children can do that one minute just fine. Some children won't last 30 seconds. Some children can sit for 3 minutes or 5 minutes. Start where they are.

Set the timer for the time you allot and instruct your child that they are not to move from the table until the timer goes off. Sometimes you will need to actually hold the child into the chair at the table for those 30 seconds. Make it a pleasant holding. The purpose is to communicate to the child that this is what we are doing right now; no other option – this is it. Once the timer goes off -- they get to go on their merry way. Increase the time by however much you think your child can reasonably handle. In the end you can create three to four times every day where your child is quietly playing for 20, 30 or even 45 minutes at a time so you can maintain your sanity and maybe even accomplish a task. How would that feel?

The principle here is that you set up times during the day when you want quiet. You are the driver in this car, not the child. You clearly communicate the expectation and follow through.

If you follow this principle over and over the child begins to "get it" -- that you mean business, that this is the matter-of-fact way that we are doing life now. Remember to keep it all as pleasant as possible. Everyone in the family will be happier and more peaceful. Peace is a good thing.

My clients are very used to hearing me say it is all about INPUT. You have to put the information into the brain in order for there to be output or what we sometimes call compliance. It doesn't just take one time for the INPUT either -- some kids need the information over and over before it gets cemented. It is worth the effort, however. It is worth the battle NOW so you and your child can reap benefits for years to come.

I have the privilege of helping parents of even the most out-of-control children by coaching them in this method – of providing the needed input that ultimately results in the change of function for their child. The child is now able to sit calmly for longer and longer periods of time. It is life-changing for the whole family.



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And remember that if you are ready for support, get in touch with us at March Forth Family to see about our monthly Family Membership Club as well as the different tiers of one-on-one coaching we offer.

To recap Tip #2: determine when you want quiet times, communicate clearly to the child what your expectation is, train the child (with timer and by increasing the time each day) to sit quietly doing some project appropriate for their age.

So now we come to Tip #3.



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TIP #3: Food choices

Your children may have sensitivities to certain foods that keep them in a perpetual state of hyperactivity.

The first red flag that could potentially be causing the struggle is additives and preservatives.

Recently, I read an excellent article entitled “Which food additives make children behave badly”?¹

This article cites a study that was done with 227 three year olds in a month long project by the UK Asthma and Allergy Research Center. For two weeks the children drank a daily fruit juice dosed with 20mg of artificial colorings and 45mg of preservative, which are either equal to or below permitted levels (in the UK). For the other two weeks the children drank a fruit juice which was identical in appearance but without the additives. The report said the results showed the artificial food colorings and sodium benzoate preservative had ‘substantial effects’ on behavior.

The scientists concluded that significant changes in children’s hyperactive behavior could be produced by removing colorings and additives from their diet. They added: ‘The findings suggest that benefit would accrue for all children from such a change - and not just for those already showing hyperactive behavior or who are at risk of allergic reactions.’

I encourage you to get into the habit of being the food label detective. You can get a listing of food additives allowed by the U.S. Government at this site:

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodIngredientsPackaging/FoodAdditives/FoodAdditiveListings/ucm091048.htm>²

There is a specific list just for colors. It is very sobering to think about what is allowed to be in our foods. We must police these things for our children. One of my friends reported to me recently that her “Friend’s son was hyperactive and she eliminated red dyes from his diet, now he is no longer hyper.

1 <http://www.foodmatters.tv/articles-1/which-food-additives-make-children-behave-badly>

2 <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodIngredientsPackaging/FoodAdditives/FoodAdditiveListings/ucm091048.htm>



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The food additives in processed foods can cause a lot of symptoms that are misdiagnosed.” So true.

Be on the lookout for other potentially harmful ingredients such as high fructose corn syrup and hydrogenated oils as well.

Here’s a quote from Dr. Mark Hyman’s article entitled “5 Reasons High Fructose Corn Syrup Will Kill You.”³

“High fructose corn syrup is an industrial food product and far from “natural” or a naturally occurring substance.”

“High doses of free fructose have been proven to literally punch holes in the intestinal lining allowing nasty byproducts of toxic gut bacteria and partially digested food proteins to enter your blood stream and trigger the inflammation that we know is at the root of obesity, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, dementia and accelerated aging.

HFCS contains contaminants including mercury that are not regulated or measured by the FDA.” You may want to read more from Dr. Hyman. His website is: www.drhyman.com.

I know being the food police may seem like a daunting task but it is so worth the battle if the end result is a calmer child. Be cautious about how much white sugar and white flour your children are getting. Always be aware of the amount of sugar your children are consuming. There are epidemic proportions of diabetes in our country right now and the diagnosis is coming in younger and younger patients.

Some children are also sensitive to foods you would never guess could be a problem. Start taking note of how your child feels and acts after consuming dairy. Another potential torment is wheat. It is important to know if your child is allergic to wheat and maybe suffers from celiac disease or if there is a sensitivity to wheat that could be causing your child hiccups in optimum development. Yes, even these seemingly harmless every day foods can be causing problems for your child.

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<http://drhyman.com/blog/conditions/5-reasons-high-fructose-corn-syrup-will-kill-you/>



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Look at breakfast foods. Check out the ingredients. Do you see high fructose corn syrup or some other form of corn syrup? Breakfast often involves dairy, wheat and sugar. Ask yourself, are there healthier alternatives? How about just fruit? Fresh – whole fruit? How about oatmeal – homemade with fruit and honey?

If just thinking about what it would take to navigate the world of investigating such possibilities is overwhelming for you. Again, mom – don't try to do it alone. Get support. Find another mom who may want to partner with you in this journey. ***You can also sign up for our complimentary breakthrough session which is a complimentary 50 minute phone or in-person session to discuss your concerns around your child and his or her development OR to discuss your concerns around your own health goals and to find out about the programs we have in place at March Forth Family to help. Our programs are not limited to location. We successfully work with clients who are not local.***

I invite you to visit our website and tell your friends all about [March Forth Family](http://www.MarchForthFamily.com).



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How March Forth Family Can Help

I want to make sure you know about some things we offer at March Forth Family.

1. We would love to invite you to a complimentary breakthrough session. These are in person or telephone conversations around the areas of child development or personal health and wellness specifically about you or your child. If you are interested in scheduling a breakthrough session, let us know by sending an email to info@marchforthfamily.com. Someone from our team will be in touch with you promptly to schedule your session.
2. We are very excited about our Family Membership Club. Check out the details on our website.
3. We take our show on the road. We do public speaking. If you have a group that you think may benefit from hearing about our experiences and getting practical action steps for some of their children's struggles, we would love to share.
4. We have several tiers of one-on-one coaching available as well. If you are interested in getting more details about our private coaching, set up a complimentary breakthrough session (as described in #1 above) today and let's get the conversation started!

I wish you all the absolute best as you nurture the young ones in your life.

Marching Forth!