



## A Heart For All Students

Podcast Episode Transcription

### AHEART #30 Tips For Teaching Preschoolers

Hey, friend, in today's episode, we are going to talk about how do we engage our resistant learners. How do we engage our preschoolers specifically, but how do we engage our younger learners or our elementary school age children or our teenagers or our college level kids or ourselves or hubbies or quite frankly, anyone? How do we get people to do that which they are not intrinsically motivated to do? How do we increase *engagement*?

And while this episode speaks specifically to younger learners and a specific situation towards my son, I'm telling you, the principle works regardless of age. Listen in. Let me know what you think. How can you reframe this to fit your dynamic between you and your child? Let me know what you think. We're in this together.

Hey, friend, welcome to A Heart for All Students podcast. My name is Lindsey Levitsky and it's my honor to be with you each week to talk about how we can homeschool and parent are outside-the-box kids so that we can equip them with the tools and strategies that they need to thrive as exactly who God has intentionally designed them to be. If your child doesn't fit into the box of the world's expectations, this is the place for you together.

One mom at a time. We can change the narrative for kids growing up with ADHD, ASD are no acronym at all. Let's do this. We're in it together.

Tips for teaching that resistant learner preschoolers and other younger kids these days. It seems like every mom with a young child is looking for tips to teaching her preschooler at home. It's no wonder because teaching our preschoolers can often feel like an uphill battle. The number one issue that so many moms face when engaging young kids or any student is *engagement*.

And unfortunately, so many moms believe this lie that homeschool life is supposed to look like school at home. And often this is where the resistance to learning comes into play. So how do you homeschool preschool?

Well, not to beat a dead horse, but let me repeat this. Whether you have a child that's in preschool or high school, homeschooling is not supposed to look like, "school at home." In fact, most people need to take the idea of the traditional school system out of their heads in order to best educate their unique children.

But here's the deal. This is the best part about homeschooling, and it should give you cause to get seriously pumped. You as a homeschool mom, have so much power to make choices and decisions that work best for your child, for you and your family dynamic.

Yeh!

Ok, so if you're struggling to keep your younger student or preschooler engaged in learning, there is so much hope.

So what's my number one tip for teaching preschoolers or young children? It's the same one that I offer for every single student, regardless of age. You ready?

*Use your child's interests* as the gold mine to learning, that it really is. When our kids resist learning, when we're trying to engage younger children or any child that struggles with taking direction, we need to think outside-the-box.

We adults have choices to make as to how we respond to "perceived disobedience." Choice #1 - We can become frustrated with our kids resistance to learning and force our will upon them. Yeah, that usually works out really well. Choice #2 - We can take personal offense when our child doesn't comply with our directives and therefore we can push harder and start yelling. Or Choice #3 - We can think outside-the-box in order to come alongside our child where they are, in order to best equip him or her for the long term.

So when it comes to engaging our kids and the learning process, that means that we adults may need to change our approach and be willing to pivot. And let go of our plans in order to meet the goal that we have for our kids, which is learning. Ultimately, this really means that we give our kids opportunities to succeed.

One thing I have learned in 20 years working with children and in the past six years of going through, you know what, with my son. With learning, so much about neuroscience, the brain self-regulation and executive functioning, *learning and stress don't work well together*.

Let me speak to something that happened just a few months ago. One morning, I realized that my boy was not excited about my plan to teach him sight words. In fact, he was pretty adamant that learning sight words was not going to happen, at least in the way I wanted it to happen.

I could have chosen to be frustrated and quite frankly, pissed off that he wasn't doing what I wanted him to do. This would have likely ended up causing undue strain and stress for both me and my son by me trying to force the issue the way I wanted it. So ultimately, that would have made the learning experience that much more stressful. And when that stress response takes over, the ability to learn and process new information plummets. Don't force it. It's not worth it in the long run.

And for more information on the brain, executive functioning behavior, learning and all the things, sign up for the Free Five Day Video Devotional Series that I have here available at <https://aheartforallstudents.com>. Trust me, it's a game changer.

So what did I end up doing that morning with my boy? I engaged him in play.

See, my plan was I wanted to just sit down for like five or ten minutes and just go through the flashcards. Clearly he wasn't interested in doing that.

Now, if you're lucky enough to have a child that wants to do that, or is easily compliant and has the executive functioning skills to override their big emotions and desires in order to do what you want them to do, that's wonderful. But that's not often the case.

And because I believe, and I know so many others believe, that God has designed each one of our children very uniquely and for a purpose. What I've learned is that often our perceived weaknesses of our children are actually their strengths, that are intended for good. And demanding that a child comply with what we want at all times does not always yield the fruit that we want long term for our children.

Again, for more information about that, check out the Five Day Devotional Series. It's free or you can go ahead and sign up for Barely Surviving To Outright Thriving, my online course that I have just recently put out. I'm so excited about it. I wish I had had that information when we were going through Years of Hell with our son. Anyways, I digress.

So that morning, instead of forcing my son to sit down and stare at flashcards while I busted through them, this is what I did. "Hey, Alvin, Simon, Theodore, baby monkey, are you guys ready to learn your words?"

Yep, I simply shifted my perspective and my attention and focus off of my boy, and I put them onto the stuffed animals that he was playing with in that moment. Pretending to be the teacher, I directed all my teaching instructions to his big sister's chipmunks and his baby monkey with the pressure off of him.

He immediately engaged in play. He loved playing along and he was clueless to the fact that he didn't really want to learn in the first place. We ended up using this strategy to learn six new sight words that day.

*Quantity doesn't equal quality* when it comes to education. Now, that day I said we only learned six new sight words. But let's take out that word "only" because many moms are going to ask after doing a short lesson, "Hey, did I do enough?" And the answer is a resounding yes for my son and I. Those six words done in peace, in fun and in connection led to engagement. It led to he and I connecting relationally, increased trust between the two of us. He was set up for success the next time we worked on sight words with the stuffed animals.

In fact, because of that experience, he eventually took the lead from me that week and began to, "teach" his stuffed animals using his new found skill.

Win, win, amen!. Nine times out of ten, your child's motivation, just the same as adult motivation, is the number one contributing factor to efforts and engagement.

When learning anything, always think, what is the long term goal? The long term goal is to have a healthy, well functioning, thriving, and if you're a believer in Jesus, a child who knows the love of God and is able to offer that love of God and grace to others. That's our long term goal. It takes one step at a time. Small chunks of teaching over time will yield a fruit, when it comes to our preschoolers and when it comes to all of our kids. So that day, my son and I worked on sight words.

But it's always important to equip our younger children with a solid foundation and phonics. And over the years, I've picked up several phonics and alphabet play-based resources to teach my kids to read. And recently, my son and I have had a blast with a ton of these resources. So check it out on <https://aheartforallstudents.com>.

You can find a resource all about my favorite play based phonics tools with a list of activity ideas in order to engage your child in constructive play, deepen your connection and get them excited about the learning process. Check it out. Let me know if you have any questions. Talk to you soon. We're in this together, friend.

Hey, friend, are you exhausted and overwhelmed by your child's big emotions and meltdowns? Girl, I get it. For years I struggled in complete desperation, brokenness and isolation, navigating my son's volatile behavior. Nothing I knew to do as a good Christian momma worked with this kid. We lived in a cycle of shame, chaos and confusion for years.

But by God's mercy, he allowed me to learn so much in this season. And I can tell you now that we are in a completely different place. That's why I've created the Free Five Day Devotional video teaching series for the exhausted momma, who knows deep down inside, that there has to be a more peaceful and life giving way to parent her outside-the-box child. Sign up for the devotional series at <https://aheartforallstudents.com/>.

Hey friend, guess what? You just finished an entire episode. Give yourself a pat on the back. In this season of parenting, where we are barely surviving, every accomplishment is a victory. So take it. And while you're at it, if you found this episode to be helpful, please consider leaving a review on iTunes or wherever you listen to your podcast episode and don't forget to subscribe, so you never miss a thing...

And if you're looking for more practical tools and encouragement as you homeschool and parent your outside-the-box child to thrive, go to [www.aheartforallstudents.com](http://www.aheartforallstudents.com). There are tons of resources, freebies and lots of extra support over there. Don't miss anything. I don't do this thing alone. Friends were in it together and together we can change the narrative for our neurodiverse outside-the-box kids.