

Dear Therapeutic Parenting,

Today was a day like so many others. Unfortunately, the scene that greeted me when I went to pick up Pigtails from school was all-too-familiar, with the teacher making a bee-line for me before I could even enter the classroom. Looking past her, I could see Pigtails sitting on the bench, red-faced and snotty-nosed from tears, with an ice-pack pressed to her face.

“So we had an incident today...” the teacher began. I immediately started to zone out as she talked, my mind already jumping to how the morning had gone, what trauma memory might be triggering her today, and preparing my speech for the parent of the child she had been violent with today.

But then I started to listen more closely to what the teacher was actually saying... “She really did nothing to provoke the other child; she was a model peer. She was playing wonderfully, taking turns, being kind. The other peer just didn’t want to wait his turn and he took a swing at her and scratched her face. She had a lot of tears of surprise initially, but she stayed calm. She waited until the peer calmed down, graciously accepted his apology, and told him it was ok that he had some struggles. She told him how very scary that must be for him and asked him what she could do to help him feel calm and safe.”

As I listened, the tears streamed down my face. The teacher quickly offered reassurances that Pigtails was just fine and she hadn’t sustained any major injury. But my free-flowing tears had nothing to do with worries about a major injury; they were tears of joy, of gratitude, of progress, of healing, of resilience, of hope, of reminders of just how far we’ve come, of so much more that elude words.

My tears were of a mom bursting with pride. Pigtails had stayed regulated through all of this. She didn’t hit back. There was no screaming. She was gracious and kind to accept a peer’s apology. She showed empathy for another person who was struggling. She did everything right. A year ago, it would have been exactly the opposite of all of those things and the teacher would have been lecturing me on how to control my child.

Those who haven’t walked this journey with us have no idea what a milestone this is. A full appreciation of the hours and years of therapeutic parenting leading to this joyous moment can only be understood fully within our family.

With my heart bursting with pride, I make my way over to Pigtails who wraps her sweet little arms around me and proudly announces, “I made good choices today, Mommy!” Yes, my precious daughter, you certainly did! Tomorrow we may have more struggles, but for today, we soak in this moment with family hugs, smiles, and perhaps some pink whipped cream that is sure to put the biggest smile on Pigtails’ face!

From,

Proud Therapeutic Mama