

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Momo often argues with his sister

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**CALMING AND SELF-REGULATION TECHNIQUES
FOR CHILDREN + TIPS FOR ADULTS**



Dr. Eva Brlek, Prof. of Rehab. & Psychotherapist

Eva Brlek is a professional in educational rehabilitation and psychotherapist. Following her dreams, she opened a private practice, Kabinet Nueva, where she can enable the maximum stimulation and realization of the potential, abilities, and possibilities of both children and adults. With an interdisciplinary approach and innovative therapeutic methods, she provides diagnostic, counseling, and therapy services in educational rehabilitation, psychology, and psychotherapy. Eva is mostly fulfilled in her role of a mother to a wonderful boy, with whom she grows and develops to her fullest possible extent.



Julija Kukec, mag. psych.

Julija Kukec has a master's degree in psychology, she is a practitioner of reality therapy and an ECHA specialist for education of the gifted. She is a professional assistant in a kindergarten, working with children to monitor their development and identify difficulties and potential giftedness. She also provides educational programs through lectures and workshops, diagnosis, and support for children and parents in the form of counseling. She is the mother of two children, who are her biggest and most important inspiration in every area of her work. In her free time, Julija enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband and children.

Eva Brlek i Julija Kukec

Momo often argues with his sister

Hypersensitivity and irritability
as a background of challenging behaviors

Illustrations:
Sven Nemet



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Adults often encounter with child's behaviors they don't know how to deal with, react to, solve, and what to do. That is why experts often describe them as challenging behaviors.

These are unacceptable behaviors because their intensity, frequency, or duration can endanger the physical safety of the child or others and interfere or pose a risk to the child's optimal learning or inclusion in social interactions with peers and adults.

One such challenging behavior is shown in the following story.

We will see how challenging behavior can be triggered by **hypersensitivity and irritability to external stimuli**.



Irritated by his sister's behaviour, little panda Momo got very angry, and started arguing and speaking bad words to his sister. This damaged his good relationship with his sister, but also his enjoyment of the activity he loved.

But Momo, just like all children who show similar challenging behaviors, chooses such behaviors because they haven't learned better and more efficient ways of **dealing with frustration**. We cannot simply label such children as naughty or poorly raised. At the core of every challenging behaviour are a child's unsatisfied needs, a bad self-image, and low self-confidence. Sometimes, behavior can be a reaction to traumatic experiences. Behind every child's behavior, there is a specific reason that adults often do not recognize when looking from their perspective.

For a child to learn how to choose better and more efficient behaviors, it is necessary to adopt the ability to self-regulate. Self-regulation is an adaptation process, and it includes a child's ability to face challenges and stresses.

Self-regulation includes **managing emotional reactions, thinking about what triggered the emotions, choosing an appropriate reaction, and the child's ability to satisfy their own individual desires and needs**.

When we help a child to learn self-regulation, we are building better and less stressful relationships with them, and we will also help them have more positive relationships with peers. That means more self-esteem, self-confidence, empathy, better socio-emotional competencies, and better overall mental health.

Find out how Momo succeeded to self-regulate in the story that follows.



Little panda Momo got a new coloring book and lots of felt-tip pens and crayons. He was looking forward to spending a rainy Saturday afternoon in his room coloring houses and dinosaurs.

He put a blanket and a pillow on the floor, lay down on his stomach and started colouring. He enjoyed the silence and the wonderful world of colours.

But the door suddenly opened, and his sister Lina entered the room.

Lina was very playfull and in a very good mood that day. She sang loudly and started playing with her wooden blocks. Boom, boom - she was knocking down towers of blocks.



– Can you please be quiet?! I need peace and quiet so I can color this house nicely – Momo said nervously.

At those words Lina started singing even louder, and at the same time, she started banging the block on the block.

– Stop it, be quiet – Momo could already feel the heat rising in his head. His face turned red, and his head felt like it was going to explode from all the noise and chaos. He was getting very angry. But his sister Lina wouldn't give up.

– You're bothering me, you're being rude! - Momo tried again, now in a tearful voice. Lina started laughing at him, stuck her tongue at him, and continued her behaviour.

Suddenly, there was a lot of yelling in the room.





Hearing something happening in the children's room, Grandma peeked through the door.

– What is going on, my little pandas?

As soon as Grandma asked that question, Momo and Lina started accusing each other.

– Momo is saying some very mean words to me and won't let me play in the room! – shouted Lina.

– Lina won't leave me alone and she keeps bothering me while I'm colouring. I was in the room first! – shouted Momo.

Grandma nodded, entered the room, and said: – I see that you are both upset.

She sat down in the armchair and invited little pandas to her lap.

– When I was a little panda as you are now, I used to get angry at my brother and sister. Then my Grandma taught me a game, and now I want to teach it to you. Okay?

– Okay! – little pandas agreed.