

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Momo fights with his mum

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Illustrations: Sven Nemet



**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.

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Resistance to set boundaries
in the background of challenging behaviours

Illustrations:
Sven Nemet



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 in a child can be triggered by **resistance to set boundaries**.



Panda Momo got very angry because the agreed time to watch the cartoon was over and he had to go to bed. He was flapping his arms and legs, hitting everything within the reach. In an intense emotional reaction, he even hit his mom.

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.



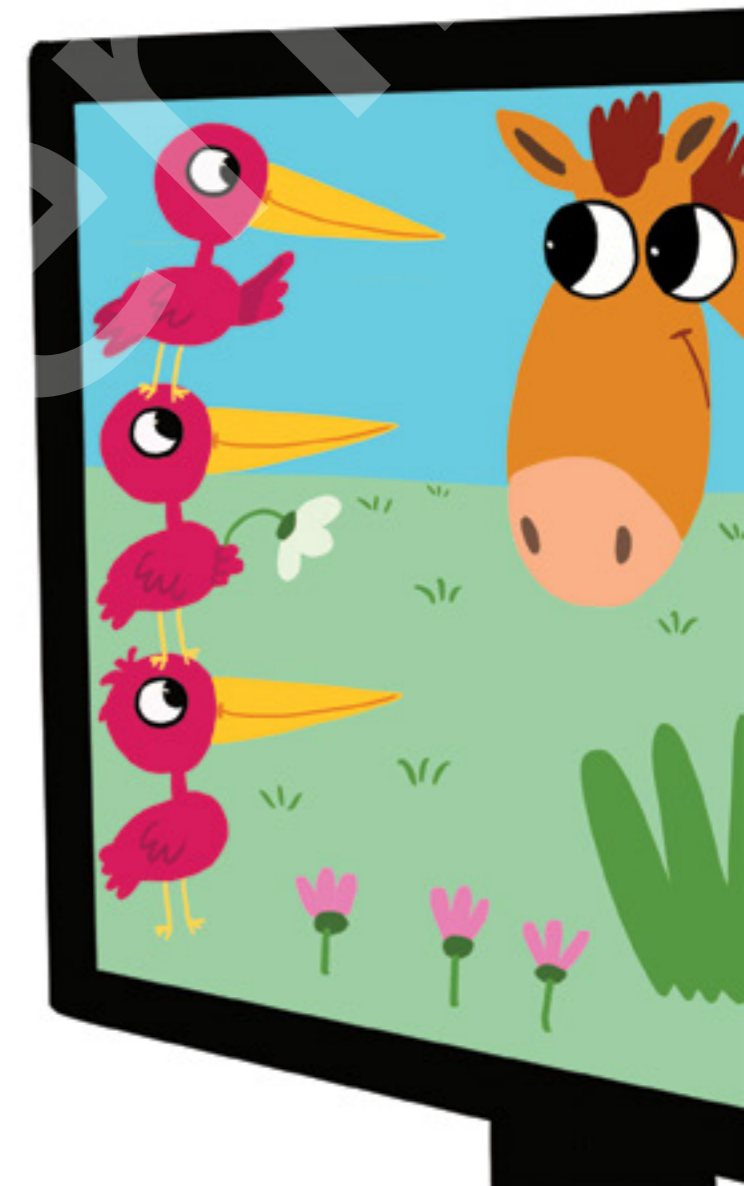


It was a cold winter's evening, and it was already dark outside. It was almost time for bed. Panda Momo enjoyed some bamboo porridge for dinner and he lay back on the soft couch. Every evening before bathing, brushing his teeth, good night stories, and cuddling, Momo would watch his favourite cartoon.

Momo loved cartoons. If it were up to him, he would watch them all day long, and even all night long instead of sleeping.

But mum always told him: – It's okay to watch a short cartoon. But it's not good for a little panda to stare at the screen all day.

Mum told him that today too, but Momo was having so much fun and was completely absorbed in the cartoon, that he didn't hear what she was saying.



When the cartoon ended, mom turned off the TV and said: – Momo, the cartoon is over. Let's go get ready for bed.

– But mom, I really want to watch just one more cartoon. Please, please. Just one more – Momo begged mum in a tearful voice.

– Momo, this cartoon was long. You have to go to bed. Go to the bathroom, I'm coming right away – mum was calm but determined.

When he realized that his mom wouldn't let him watch another cartoon, Momo got angry.

He felt his heart beating hard. Then he started breathing fast, and then faster and faster... At one point, it felt like he would run out of breath. And that he wouldn't be able to breathe at all. Different uncomfortable thoughts were running through his head. He even thought that his head was going to explode.

And then, instead of thoughts, everything in his head went black. He just saw his arms and legs flying through air, and then... he couldn't think about anything anymore.





Mum watched her little panda turn red, huff, scream, and flail his arms and legs around. He was hitting wherever he could and wherever he reached. He was knocking things over around him.

– Momo, I see you're angry because you are not allowed to watch another cartoon – mum said calmly. She approached Momo wanting to help him, but that seemed to make him even angrier. He started screaming and crying even louder, struggling to break free from his mother's hands, and that is when he also hit her in frustration.

Mum moved away, but continued to speak calmly.

- Momo, it's okay to be angry, but it's not okay to hit me. That hurts.

Momo still didn't hear her and couldn't think about anything. He hit the couch, threw things around him and cried loudly.

