

HOW TO RAISE CONFIDENT, CAPABLE KIDS

跟著光光老師，教出高正向 小孩

Child psychiatry clinician and famed “Concentration Wizard” Liao Sheng-Kuang is here to help you understand the real reasons behind your kids’ common behavioral issues, and shows you how inattention, hyperactivity, and poor posture can all be solved through constructive activity, no scolding required!

Everybody knows Nobita Nobi, right – the good-hearted but lazy main character in *Doraemon*? Parents who have their own “Nobita Nobi” know him better than most – how he lies around all day, falls asleep in class, and always forgets his homework – and might be apt to think it’s because he’s a “bad kid.” But the famous child psychiatry clinician Liao Sheng-Kuang wouldn’t agree: in his eye, Nobita Nobi is a perfect example of a child whose natural biological needs are being misunderstood as bad behavior.

With that in mind, Dr. Kuang-Kuang (as many kids know him) addresses childhood behavior in the five areas that usually matter most to parents: attention, study, self-care, emotional balance, and interpersonal relationships, in each case looking *behind* the surface expression into biological and psychological processes behind it. Does your child slump over the table or sprawl over the sofa? Weak abdominal muscles might be making sitting up straight too painful, or underdeveloped shoulders are turning writing into a toil.

In almost every case of what adults think of as standard child misbehavior, the child is responding instinctively to needs that might be poorly understood by everyone involved. By illuminating the links between body, brain, and behavior, and offering new practices that help children grow instead of limiting them, Dr. Kuang-Kuang can help pull families out of the cycle of punishment and misbehavior that does no one any good.



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By Liao Sheng-Kuang

Translated by Om Buffalo

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Shizuka Minamoto has always been an obedient child who cares a lot about her performance. She'll try her best to endure anything no matter how uncomfortable she feels. But even Shizuka Minamoto finds it really hard to sit on her heels for too long. Sometimes her feet go numb. If only she were a boy, she could lie down however she wanted and never get scolded. When Doraemon hears about it, he immediately pulls out a "Penetrating Cushion."

The magical thing about the cushion is that although it looks like you're kneeling, your feet can sink into the ground and rest underneath the floor. The real thing you need to worry about is whether or not it's clean underneath the floor!

The Situation: Always Have Trouble Sitting Still

Some children like Nobita Nobi just can't sit up straight. Whenever they're not sprawled in all directions at once, they're slumped over their desks, or putting their feet up in the air. Even when they are just sitting on the couch, their bodies slouch like they never grew any bones. Why can't some kids just sit still and behave?

It's actually quite easy for the vast majority of children to sit still, but for kids like Nobita Nobi who lack "core muscle group endurance," it's very difficult. Sitting down tires them out

quickly because they don't have enough muscle strength, so they squirm around and can't sit still.

The "Core muscle groups" are those that help us maintain our posture. You need to keep them strong in order to hold yourself upright. A child whose core is weaker will quickly start leaning from side-to-side like a caterpillar, unable to sit still. When these same children are reading they'll support their heads with their hands to keep their heads from wagging around. The problem is, when they do this, it looks like they're really bored, which easily makes the teacher mad. As a result, their teacher will write in their performance report to their parents that they aren't taking class seriously.

In reality, this isn't a matter of children not trying or being uncooperative. Instead, it's about children not having enough opportunities to exercise their muscles. Think about it. When we were young, we often had to lift our arms up in the air to grab things in high places, which naturally exercised our back muscles and gave us strength. By the time we turned seven, we had enough exercise that our arms and back were naturally strong, so we had no trouble sitting upright.

By contrast, today's children rarely lift their arms overhead. All of their movements occur below their shoulders. And of course, if they don't have enough strength in their arms and back, they'll sway back and forth when they sit. Combine that with a lack of abdominal strength, and they won't just sway back and forth, they might end up lying down on the floor.

A Message for Parents

When we ask children to "focus," do we want them to concentrate on what they are doing, or to obediently sit still? I think it's obviously the former, but is it true that as long as children are sitting upright, they'll be the most mentally focused? Or are they just enduring discomfort like Shizuka Minamoto?

Everyone believes Shizuka Minamoto because she's a good kid, so they are willing to help her solve the problem. But if Nobita Nobi says the same thing, everyone will think he's just lazy and making excuses, when in fact he's the child that is genuinely in need of help.

For children who lack core muscle endurance, sitting on a chair can be as exhausting as squatting. They have to spend most of their energy maintaining proper posture as they sit. When such is the case, do you think they'll concentrate on studying, or just stare blankly? When they work hard to sit properly, we complain that they aren't listening carefully to what the teacher is saying, but when they listen intently, we blame them for not sitting still. Of course, children will just feel more and more upset, and they might even start to dread studying.

We should understand "focus on studying" and "sit still" as separate orders requiring separate training. First let children study comfortably, so they aren't scared of it. Make studying a relaxing activity. We should also provide them with suitable desks and chairs that provide additional support, as opposed to constantly standing at their side admonishing them to "sit up straight" and "don't move." This doesn't help anything. All it does is make the child feel even more exhausted when they are trying to study.

Of course, bad posture can lead to eyesight problems, or even scoliosis of the spine. Therefore, you must continually work to improve your child's core muscle endurance. A child

with stronger muscles will naturally sit still. You won't need to keep reminding them to sit up straight and concentrate on studying.

Here's What Mr. Kuang Would Do

We often emphasize the importance of "movement," while neglecting the importance of "posture." Yet you must have good posture in order to achieve coordinated movement. Thus, the strength of your core muscle groups is crucial. Think about it: how can a child who cannot keep his body stable move his hands and feet in harmony?

Children need more than just your patience; they need you to provide them with the proper training to cultivate their core muscle group strength. Of course, this isn't easy because strength training requires repetitive and sustained exercise. It's like going to the gym: you can't just go one day, do a thousand push-ups, and expect to be super-strong the next day. You must continuously exercise to let your muscles develop. And parents are their children's personal trainers.

We can help our children identify the following problems and assist in their training:

1. Weak Back Muscles

Children with weak back muscles often slouch. Don't be too worried when this happens; it is often the result of their not lifting their arms enough. One way you can help is by not putting all of your children's things in the lowest shelves of the cupboard. Put them in high places so your children have more opportunities to raise their arms higher. Additionally, you can also hang a balloon with a string to a height that your child can reach to, and have your child hit it 100 times. This will strengthen your child's back muscles.

2. Weak Abdominal Muscles

Children who like lying down often have weak abdominal muscles. Think of the abdomen like a rubber ball. When it is weak, it's like a ball with no air, unable to support the downward pressure of the chest resting on top of it. Clearly, children can't sit upright without proper abdominal strength. If doing sit-ups is too hard for your child, then you can have them first play on a bouncy horse, or take them to the park and play on the rocking horse. All these games and toys will strengthen a child's abdominal muscles.

3. Unstable Shoulders

When we write, we don't merely hold the pen with our fingers, we also need to move our arms. Think about it: If a child has insufficiently strong shoulders, and has to drag one arm around on the desk when writing, their body will naturally lean progressively harder on the desk. How could they possibly continue to sit up straight? It's actually very easy to train these muscles. All they need to do is play with a diabolo (Chinese yo-yo). Playing with diabolos requires children to move their hands continually, while keeping their shoulders stable, otherwise the diabolo won't spin. Any child who can work a diabolo has developed enough strength to keep her shoulders stable.

A Small Tip for Parents

Don't try to jam all of your child's strength training into a single day. They're much more likely to get injured if you do! In fact, they ought to rest after exercise to give their muscles time to grow and get stronger. It's just like going to the gym. In order to achieve the best results, you need to spread out their workouts by having them exercise at least three times a week with sufficient time in between. This is the best training method.