

[00:00:01.360] - Lisa Qualls

Welcome to the Adoption Connection podcast, where we offer resources to equip you and stories to inspire you on your adoption journey. I'm Lisa Qualls.

[00:00:10.390] - Melissa Corkum

And this is Melissa Corkum. Don't worry, we get it, and we're here for you.

[00:00:19.020] - Melissa Corkum

Hi, friends, welcome to Episode one hundred forty of the Adoption Connection podcast. This month, August, we are devoting to all things back to school. So make sure that you go back to last week's episode where we talk about de-cluttering and how to manage all the stuff that the beginning of the school year brings and then make sure to hit subscribe on your favorite podcast app so that you'll get the future August episodes directly to your device without having to remember about them. We're super excited to invite back to the podcast the author of Riley The Brave. So, Lisa, will you tell us a little bit more about Jessica?

[00:00:58.380] - Lisa Qualls

Yes. Jessica Sinarski the author of Riley The Brave, as well as other books. She is a dynamic presenter, she is a bilingual author, and she's actually a clinical supervisor as well. So she has been a certified adoption therapist since 2008, so she really gets us and our families. She equips parents and professionals to be healers for children, both as a licensed professional counselor and through her resource and training platform, Brave Brains. So I love this conversation with Jessica. She's a wonderful guest, a wonderful author, and I think you're going to love it, too.

[00:01:40.200] - Lisa Qualls

Hi, Jessica, welcome back to the Adoption Connection podcast.

[00:01:44.850] - Jessica Sinarski

Hi, Lisa. Thanks for having me.

[00:01:46.700] - Lisa Qualls

I'm glad to have you here. I really enjoyed our conversation last time about your book, Riley The Brave. I'm a huge, huge fan and I loved our conversation. And so I'm just so delighted to get to spend a little more time with you this morning, this time talking specifically about back to school and how we can help our kids and ourselves be prepared for going back to school, especially in light of last year and how different that was for almost everybody. So we're coming into a brand new year and we want to support our families. So tell me, how do you feel about back to school?

[00:02:30.370] - Jessica Sinarski

Oh, that's a good question. I was just talking with another mom about how she finds herself getting really emotional at the end of each school year. And I'm the opposite. I find that at the beginning of each school year that my emotions are heightened. I have some big feels about back to school. I, I think nervous about how kids teachers will be and how they'll adjust and making sure I have all of the T's crossed and I's dotted for, for all of that, all of the paperwork. And I feel like the first week of school for whoever does most of the paperwork in your house, which is usually me, it's like a lot of homework for moms that first week. So there's all those feelings. And then I know my kids are having a lot of their own anticipation and excitement and nervous and all of those things. So it's just, it can be a little bit messy.

[00:03:33.760] - Lisa Qualls

Yes. Yes, it can. And I think you're right. There's this mixture of excitement, like I know a lot of us are so glad our kids are going to have, I think, a normal school year. I mean, we'll see, right. But just hopefully a return to normal or a lot of normal. And there's also that feeling like, do we still remember how to do this and can we get organized enough and what's it going to take? And and, you know, I think there were elements of of the calm of last year that some of us liked. And this is going to bring back the busy when we start school.

[00:04:09.600] - Jessica Sinarski

Yea, and I think all of our kids sort of respond differently to that. So one of my boys, you know, he gets his own backpack together, he's got all his he's he's on it. That's how his brain works and that's that just works for him. For another of my boys, it's more of a struggle. There's more that he feels nervous about. And so I know for him, we work a little more concretely on what the transition is going to look like and get as much information as we can about what class is going to look like and maybe who his teacher's going to be. And I know that I have to mentally and emotionally prepare for him to get stuck because inevitably, not because he's a bad kid, but because his his little brain just sometimes get stuck on things that I feel like he, quote, should know better by now. And I think as I talk with other parents and with families that I work with, I think that's a pretty common feeling, is that we maybe have a kid or two that get really stuck. And so that's that's part of my mission is to get in there with what's going on in that brain and what are the tools that we can use to help the connections that they need to and be able to get out the door in the morning.

[00:05:34.990] - Lisa Qualls

Right, right. OK, so give me an example of a kid getting stuck somehow, somehow on a school morning.

[00:05:44.290] - Jessica Sinarski

So, I mean, there are a number that come to mind that we have experienced firsthand. So the first that comes to mind is even just getting up in the morning. So I can think of countless mornings that we've really worked on even how that wake up goes. And I'm sure you can relate with all of the children that you have worked on this with. So two of my boys are morning guys and they're up and at 'em, no problem. And one, especially on school mornings, really likes to sleep in. And so we've worked on is that we've really tried to unpack what's the need, what is the underlying need of why it's really hard to get going in the morning. And so that's taken different shape over time. We at some points were being, I mean, we're usually pretty consistent with bedtime, but making sure we were hitting bed time to make sure he was getting enough sleep so that that wasn't what was going on. We found that sometimes it just takes him a little time to get to get the positive part of being awake, going and so having something a little playful with me in the morning. So we went through a phase where we played hot hands in his bed first thing in the morning when he got up.

[00:07:14.910] - Lisa Qualls

Ok, you've got to pause and tell us what "hot hands" is.

[00:07:16.390] - Jessica Sinarski

So, so it wouldn't work for every kid, but it works for many. So he holds his little hands out and I put my hands, he holds his hands face up and I hold my hands face down on top. Then he tries to swing his little hands up and and hit the top of my hands before I can pull him away and we switch off when if you hit the hands and you're good, again, for kids who are more sensitive to touch or who, maybe that would feel scary. Obviously great for my guy who likes the rough and tumble. And so that was a good fit and and it got us going. It got the positive connected sort of brain engaged so that he could then get dressed and brush teeth and do all of those things. It's tempting sometimes to just want to say, like, get up, it's time to get up, get up. You know, even with the added benefit of knowing a little bit more about what's going on in his brain, we've done something called neurofeedback, so I've seen a little sort of picture inside his brain. And I know that certain things aren't quite working like maybe another kid his age would be. And even still, it's hard for me to hold in mind that this is how his brain works, this is what he needs to be able to be successful. And so that's where I've had to shift. And I've seen that with a lot of families that I work with. We would love if it could just be another dishwasher, do the thing and have that go well for so many of our kids, that's not what activates the parts of their brain that can get things done, especially boring things like getting dressed or unloading the dishwasher.

[00:09:05.880] - Lisa Qualls

Right. It's so hard, I think, for us as parents sometimes to figure out is this a won't, I won't get up or is this a can't, like I can't quite do it? These are very, very different. And they might actually look a lot the same.

[00:09:20.350] - Jessica Sinarski

Yes.

[00:09:20.830] - Lisa Qualls

The kid rolling over, covering their heads saying, "No, I can't get up!" You know, is it a can't or is it a won't? I think the more we can tune into that and I do think often it is a can't. It's a struggle, the brain is not able, the brain and body are not able to do what we expect them to be able to just hop up and do, like, OK, time to do this. And their brains, it takes a while for them to catch up or whatever it is.

[00:09:47.700] - Jessica Sinarski

I think that's spot on, especially those of us who are parenting kids who've experienced some separation and trauma and and challenge. Even outside of that, there are lots of reasons that our brains might just work a little differently. As much as we can pull the shame out of that, both for our kids and for ourselves as parents. I know sometimes when my kids are struggling, my mom guilt goes into overdrive. And so as much as we can pull the shame out of out of these kinds of just everyday experiences, the better it's going to go for all of us, the healthier that will feel as a family and the more progress we're making at building those upstairs brain pathways in the brain.

[00:10:36.840] - Lisa Qualls

Right. Because the more we go into either shame in ourselves, like what's the matter with me? I can't seem to get this kid to do what I want him to do, or maybe I'm not really a good parent or whatever it is. The more we go into that, I think the more rigid we get.

[00:10:53.880] - Jessica Sinarski

Yes.

[00:10:54.450] - Lisa Qualls

And our thinking. And then it's like, oh, I have to win this battle.

[00:10:58.500] - Jessica Sinarski

Yes.

[00:10:59.580] - Lisa Qualls

And and then everything could deteriorate and we end up with kids having very big feelings and sometimes really big behaviors.

[00:11:07.380] - Jessica Sinarski

Yeah, that's so true. And even as you were talking about that, how we go into that rigid part of ourselves, I think from a brain perspective where our downstairs brain is trying to protect us with power and control, we are trying to have power and control in the situation. Just like, spoiler alert, our kids are trying to have power and control in the situation, especially if they've had lots of experiences where they haven't had power and control. That's going to come out more as you talk about in your book. So something that I have found really helpful, it was, I know it's something that's familiar to many of your listeners, is the model of PACE, of being playful, accepting, curious and empathic that was developed by Dan Hughes. I don't see a downside to learning about it and using it, even if your kids are neurotypical and everything is going swimmingly, that there's something about those attributes that builds connection both interpersonally and neurologically. That we know ourselves better, we know our kids better when we can interact in this PACEful way, this playful, accepting, curious, empathic kind of way.

[00:12:23.640] - Lisa Qualls

Well, I love it and I'm a huge fan of Dr. Hughes. So, yes, let's talk about this. Can you go through them just one at a time, and let's just really kind of flesh it out so that everybody, we're all understanding what each of those words means and how we can apply them.

[00:12:44.760] - Melissa Corkum

Hey, friends, we're taking a quick break to make sure you know about our upcoming workshop, overcoming blocked care for Dads. It's on Monday, August 16th, at 7:00 p.m. Eastern, 4:00 p.m. Pacific. We originally created resources for moms experiencing Blocked Care. But over and over, moms told us that dads needed support for blocked care, too.

[00:13:07.620] - Lisa Qualls

I just want to jump in and give a quick definition of blocked care in case you haven't heard of it before. When our children experience early adversity, it activates a premature defense mechanism that may put them in a chronic state of survival. This results in something called blocked trust. As a result, some children do not respond to our efforts of caregiving. As a parent, you may begin to feel ineffective and experience a sense of apathy called blocked care. During this workshop, dads, you will learn the brain science to understand your feelings and make powerful changes, gain the motivation and endurance to pursue a relationship with your child, overcome feelings of shame and guilt, and learn step by step practices you need to reclaim the parent you know you can be.

[00:13:57.720] - Melissa Corkum

The suggested donation for this workshop is twenty dollars, but all are welcome regardless of ability to donate. Our hosts for this workshop are Greg Lombard Rea and Jay Derting. Both are adoptive dads and TBRI practitioners. For more information or to sign up, go to [theadoptionconnection.com/dads](http://theadoptionconnection.com/dads). Now back to today's episode.

[00:14:27.290] - Lisa Qualls

Kind of flesh it out so that everybody, we're all understanding what each of those words means and how we can apply them.

[00:14:35.000] - Jessica Sinarski

So we'll start with with the playful, playfulness, though, that's not necessarily, it doesn't have to happen in this order. So it's not that you have to be playful and then accepting, etc., but I find playfulness a good place to start, in part because it's it's a light way of being. It's a way to engage with your world that helps me not take life quite so seriously or not take myself quite so seriously in ways that are going to get me in that rigid, power and control kind of state of mind. So playfulness is not like go get a board game and play it with your kids, it's lovely if that works for you guys, great, go do that. But it's things like the hot hands or it's things like your tone of voice that I might say when somebody talks back to me, "Oh my goodness! I think we're going to try that again. I think you meant, hey, mom, can I please..." There's a way to be playful in your interactions that helps helps quiet the parts of our kids brains that are protective and defensive, understandably protective and defensive, and helps wake up that upstairs brain where logic and cooperation and some of those things live. So playfulness is just such a powerful tool that that I can go from getting angry at my kid for not getting himself dressed to putting his his socks on my ears and being silly about it. And then that creates a different interaction between us that helps him be able to comply. That helps him move from from can't to can, to I will. I can do this.

[00:16:35.120] - Lisa Qualls

Well, I do think there's something to be said for that lightness, you know, in our faces, in our voices, and just that feeling in our home that that, you know, this is a loving place. This is we want, I want to be here with you. And I'm here to help, I'm not here to, this is a, it's a tricky balance because our kids need to do what we need them to do, but it is a different feeling to it, like, hey, I'm here for you, let's put these clothes on. You know? But but we have to be, it takes some energy and a little preparation on our part to be playful, especially in the morning. And if we're juggling a lot of kids.

[00:17:18.200] - Jessica Sinarski

Yeah.

[00:17:18.650] - Lisa Qualls

I think parents who are listening, this is this is so important. But it's going to require some planning ahead to make sure you've got a gap of time to give that three minutes that it might take or may not take a lot, but if we're just running right to the wire, being playful is going to go really quickly and we

know it's powerful. So OK. All right.

[00:17:41.660] - Jessica Sinarski

Well, you're touching on that, that it's so easy to end up in sort of our reactive parenting instead of proactive parenting that's really being peaceful, requires some self-regulation for the parent, real, true self care, some nurturing of our upstairs brain, of our own play. We've got to have joy to give it. And so if you're listening and thinking, oh, no, play is the last thing on my mind. I hear you, I really do. It's it's a lot to expect of ourselves. And so if we can find places that that we have some lightness and some humor and some shared experience, man, is that powerful for us to be able to muster that for our kids?

[00:18:34.370] - Lisa Qualls

Really good point, you're right. It's really hard to pull it out of nowhere.

[00:18:38.100] - Jessica Sinarski

Yeah.

[00:18:38.750] - Lisa Qualls

Helps if we have a little reserve.

[00:18:40.870] - Jessica Sinarski

Yeah, for sure.

[00:18:42.710] - Lisa Qualls

That's great. OK, next.

[00:18:44.450] - Jessica Sinarski

So playfulness and then accepting or acceptance is the A. And I always start by saying it means you're accepting that child's experience or inner world. It doesn't mean accepting the behavior. So, so it might look like, in a little way, my my son wasn't putting away the silverware. I can use, I can be playful with him and it was his it's his job, he has the skills, he has the capacity to do this, but he wasn't doing it. So I'm playfully saying, hey, oh my goodness, I bet you can't get your silverware done before I go and wipe off the table or whatever it is. I can I can be sort of playful with it, OK, that's not really working. I can even say, I can get on his level and say, oh, buddy, I know you really don't want to put away silverware. I know this is so boring and you're ready to go play with Legos or whatever it is. That might be what accepting looks like. It doesn't mean I say, you know what, it's OK, just go play with Legos. So it's it's a different phenomenon. And it can happen with big kid stuff, too. Your kid stole something at school or was smoking with their friends that if we can, if we can start from a place of I, I get that you needed to do this, that you wanted to do this, that there was something in you that this felt like a good a good decision or that your impulses got the best of you or whatever it is. If I could start from that place of accepting the inner you, that can go a long way. I think my hope in some of the the work that I do with Riley, the Brave is, is helping adults accept some of the defenses that are left over. So I can accept that you had a squirrel moment and took that iPod from your friend or that that iPad or phone or whatever it was. It doesn't mean it's OK that you stole from your friend, but I get that truth telling or or keeping your hands to yourself is really hard for reasons that make a lot of sense in your story. And I'm here with you to figure out how we can make it better with your friend and how we can we can keep learning this really tough skill of self-control or whatever it is. So that was a whole little winding path of what acceptance can look like. But it's so powerful when our kids know that we love them and want the best for them, even if it means that a certain behavior is not acceptable.

[00:21:27.920] - Lisa Qualls

Right. Because I think what it demonstrates to them is that they are not just the behavior they are, they are precious and loved and accepted no matter what. I mean.

[00:21:40.760] - Jessica Sinarski

That's right.

[00:21:41.300] - Lisa Qualls

We won't agree with all the things they do, you know, but that doesn't mean we're going to stop loving them or stop them or they won't be in our families. You know, this is, the foundation is love and acceptance and Dr. Purvis used to use the words a lot about their preciousness. Like they have to know that we see that in them. And I think one of the things that has helped me a lot is getting to a point and it's not perfect, but especially with older kids and teens of remembering it's not about me and that my worth and value is not tied to my children's behaviors. You know that I'm a good mom, even if my kid makes a bad decision. And so I don't have to get into my own fear space, like drop into my lower brain.

[00:22:30.740] - Lisa Qualls

I can stay up here and my thinking brain and still be loving mom, even if my child makes a bad decision or suffer the consequences of a big mistake that they make. Still be present as a loving, secure mom.

[00:22:46.520] - Jessica Sinarski

Yeah, I think, it makes me think of that early, early stage that so many of our kids missed or it was in it. It maybe looked a little different in your family of that infancy. The preciousness of being a newborn and everything about you is is delightful. Your poop is no big deal, you're peeing on your mom and it's OK and you're spitting up and like parenting is a messy business, but usually we have all these chemicals in our brain like oxytocin and and dopamine that's rewarding us as parents in those early days and weeks and months that help us get through that. And then we're still holding on to that that knowledge of our child's intrinsic intrinsic preciousness and our child has internalized that.

[00:23:35.300] - Lisa Qualls

Yes.

[00:23:36.020] - Jessica Sinarski

And that's part of what where pace the acceptance part of pace can be really powerful for sort of re-wiring a brain to understand that that they're OK, they're good. You weren't, you aren't unlovable, rejectable. You now, all of those tapes that are kind of going in their head, even if it's not conscious that it's in, you know, we know now that this goes down to a cellular level, that that that sense of of rejection or or fear or unlove ability is just so palpable. And so PACE helps us be able to to come out of that a little bit.

[00:24:16.670] - Lisa Qualls

OK, C, tell us that C stands for.

[00:24:18.710] - Jessica Sinarski

C. C is for curiosity. And one helpful thing to hang curiosity on is, you're curious about the inner world of your child more than you're curious about the facts of the situation. We know a lot of kids with trauma histories have a hard time piecing together the truth that that their brains kind of fill in the gaps sometimes. And so it's not so much about interrogating for information. Curiosity is a stance of of wanting to understand, of wanting to hear what's underneath, especially maybe around some negative behavior, but really around positive stuff, too. How, how did you have the strength to be able to do that? For us as parents, it often shows up as pausing for a second before we have our initial reaction, because so often the behavior is maybe not exactly, the motive is not exactly what we imagined it to be. So I have a silly example. My one of my boys had, I had said earlier in the day, hey, make sure all your clothes are put away. I thought that was an instruction he could handle so I hadn't followed up. And then we came up at bedtime and I see all these clothes in front of his dresser. I'm like, well, buddy, what's going on? You know, what is this? I told you, put your clothes away. I was not in my most PACEful way as a parent, but luckily he didn't flip right to his defense brain and he was able to say, oh, no, mom, it's fine. So this is what I'm wearing on Monday and this is what I'm wearing Tuesday, this on Wednesday. So here I was, I was ready to be sort of punitive or judgey about what I perceived as him disobeying when really he was being proactive in planning out his week. And if I had come in and said, hey, what's going on here? Instead of immediately assuming that he did the wrong

thing, that could have gone even smoother. Thankfully, he kept in his upstairs for that interaction, but I know that's not the case for so many of us and that what might have that might have turned into shut down and you don't even understand me and this whole spiral over something as silly as him setting his clothes out for the week.

[00:26:45.450] - Lisa Qualls

I think being curious has been one of the best tools for me as a mom, because it is really easy for us to assume things about our kids behavior or something that they've they've done. And we may be assuming very wrong. And then we miss out on the connection and we actually can kind of build a wall because we are, accusing may be a strong word, but we are attributing something to our child's behavior that may not be accurate. And so it can be something like that and I think also Dr. Purvis, of course, always talked about seeing the need behind the behavior.

[00:27:25.650] - Jessica Sinarski

Yes.

[00:27:26.280] - Lisa Qualls

Sometimes our kids have behaviors and we see this out front, this demanding or dysregulated or whatever it is, or the stealing or hoarding food or whatever. We see that behavior.

[00:27:38.340] - Jessica Sinarski

That's right.

[00:27:38.730] - Lisa Qualls

And we want to go after that behavior.

[00:27:40.410] - Jessica Sinarski

That's right.

[00:27:41.310] - Lisa Qualls

But that behavior is expressing a need.

[00:27:43.500] - Jessica Sinarski

That's right.

[00:27:44.340] - Lisa Qualls

And that, and it may not be easy to figure out. And that's where therapists can be helpful. Wise friends can be helpful, you know, like, OK, what do you think could be going on here? And some kids are old enough that you can we can actually have those conversations. But a lot of times it's just really having to think hard on our part. And I, I think therapeutic parenting is really tiring because it does demand so much of us. But this is some place that we need to put our energy because it's incredibly helpful if we can figure out why is my child doing that?

[00:28:19.410] - Jessica Sinarski

Yeah, that's really helpful to hear about your experience of it. As you're saying that I'm thinking about so many of our kids with sensory needs.

[00:28:27.780] - Lisa Qualls

Yes.

[00:28:28.230] - Jessica Sinarski

It can look like bad behavior. That can look like irresponsible, impulsive, whatever kind of behavior. And if we can be curious with them and say, oh, my goodness, I wonder if your body needs to move and that's why you're pulling your sister's hair or jumping, jumping on the furniture or whatever it is, I find curiosity, especially with younger kids, is often sort of wondering aloud that we, we put our guesses out there, we don't say, why are you jumping on the furniture? We say, oh, wow, it looks like your legs really have some energy in them. Let's find find some silly thing that doesn't take a lot of

energy for me. Oh, wait, I don't say that part out loud. I just do that in my head.

[00:29:12.660] - Lisa Qualls

Like with school age kids, you know, middle school, high school, all of that, you know, the child who cannot seem to give you the permission slips that need to be signed or until they're calling you from school because they forgot and they need you to sign it and bring it, or they can be the only kid who doesn't go on the field trip. Can you tell this has happened? You know, but for kids who struggle with executive functioning, you know, wondering aloud, like, you know, I wonder if it's really hard for you to remember to give me these things at the end, when you come home from school. How can we make that easier? You know, it's not a kid who's being selfish or purposefully trying to stress out the parent. It's like, that permission slip went into the binder that was missing in the first place and was, it just evaporated from the mind, right. And so when we can be curious, then we can help solve the problem.

[00:30:07.510] - Jessica Sinarski

That's right. That's right. And so often we want to jump, we want to jump to fix it mode in the behavioral sense of like how do I how do I make this behavior stop? But if we can pull back into our into our curiosity, we have a better shot at it going well in the long run, we have a better shot at true change it at making the habits for forming healthier executive function or stronger executive function to be able to turn in permission slips or pay your bills on time or, you know, all of those skills that are building on each other. Whereas if we're just punitive, well, you don't get to go on the field trip because you didn't do that right, turn that in. Natural consequences are great and useful a lot, but is that, is that a helpful natural consequence of the situation or do we need to do some, some brainstorming being on the same team of how this can go to better or both maybe? Sometimes it might be that you've done the brainstorming and we're still in the same spot. Maybe it is helpful to have that natural consequence of not going. But I do think we have to be so careful about not punishing how a brain is functioning.

[00:31:24.970] - Lisa Qualls

Especially especially if we know our kids come with a history of trauma to their brains, you know, of developmental changes in their brains. Because I think what we want to communicate is, I really am on your team. So, you know, I had a young teen today who left for football practice early this morning, not thinking about the fact that he was going to go straight to work and then straight to a basketball game and just didn't plan all of those steps out. And I've had to just sort of sit with that, sit with my feelings for a little bit. But I'm going to text and say, OK, how can I help you? What do you need? Now, how much better would have been if last night we had looked at the schedule and said, OK, then I could have said, how can I help you? That would have been better, but I think just recognizing, yeah, this is a young teenager trying to balance actually way more than he did in middle school, early morning football, the first job, evening basketball, you know, like that's a lot for a kid to balance. And so a little more support before would have been would have been helpful. But I'd rather not be the parent who says, guess you didn't pack any food, you're not going home until 10 o'clock tonight, too bad for you. That does not help our children. I don't think that actually builds responsibility.

[00:32:46.240] - Jessica Sinarski

Right. Especially for, especially for our kids who have maybe need a little extra of the the parent as trustworthy, the parent as comforter, the parent as on my team, that if that if that role is shaky for a kiddo for a variety of reasons, but often related to early life experiences, or maybe there's some neurological challenges that make it hard for hard for a kid to know, you got me, Mom, like we're in this together and you want my success, so it's not that you're going to, quote unquote, bail him out forever, but this seems like a way to be the along side. You know, maybe not as proactive as you wish it had been, but you don't have to live in shame and guilt around that. Life is full and busy. And that this is I think this is the power of being accepting and curious and even you're bringing us right into empathy. So E is for empathy. You are, you just demonstrating that beautifully, actually, because you're imagining what it would be like for him as a young teen, you know, going to football practice early in the morning and juggling a first job and figuring out all of the steps in between. And that gives you a different perspective on the best way forward in this situation. That is so powerful and exhausting.

[00:34:16.180] - Lisa Qualls  
Yes, right.

[00:34:16.660] - Jessica Sinarski  
Especially if you're trying to do it with multiple kids!

[00:34:19.110] - Lisa Qualls  
Well, I think that curiosity part combined with empathy makes me say, OK, I think we need to print out your work schedule and hang it on the refrigerator. Yeah, your job has a great app and it's on your phone. But in the morning, when you're getting ready to leave for football, you're going to see the refrigerator.

[00:34:38.380] - Jessica Sinarski  
That's right.

[00:34:38.890] - Lisa Qualls  
That might be a good clue.

[00:34:41.350] - Jessica Sinarski  
Let's make it visual.

[00:34:43.040] - Lisa Qualls  
Yes, let's make it more visual, more concrete. Just put those supports in place like, I live by Google Calendar. If I did not have Google Calendar, I would, that is a support I put in place for myself because I can't function without access to my calendar in multi colors. But I'm an adult and I figure that out over time and our kids just need a little help figuring out what they need.

[00:35:08.230] - Jessica Sinarski  
Yes. And it might look different from what you need. So I even like that example of like you, Google Calendar works for you, but it might be that that paper on the fridge or it might be the getting Alexa to remind you about something with your morning alarm or it might be like whatever whatever the the strategy is that that's again part of where that excepting, curious, empathic comes into play because we're figuring out their inner world, how they are going to make it in life.

[00:35:44.620] - Lisa Qualls  
Right

[00:35:44.620] - Jessica Sinarski  
Not my pattern for how for how I make it.

[00:35:49.210] - Lisa Qualls  
Right, exactly. Because our brains are so different. We have a fair number of non neurotypical people in my family and we, our brains are just different. And so we all are going to need different tools and supports. So I want to move towards talking about actually a beautiful resource that you have created that is just being released into the world. Will you share about your new book?

[00:36:13.810] - Jessica Sinarski  
I have taught PACE for a long time and and worked with PACE and I wanted to see it in story form. And so the second installment of Riley the Brave is called Riley the Brave Makes it to School. It had a variety of titles when when it was in progress, but we landed on "Makes it to School" because that's really how it feels sometimes. I was thinking that.

[00:36:41.470] - Lisa Qualls  
It's not the Tidy Riley Goes to School, no, no, he Makes it to School.

[00:36:46.660] - Jessica Sinarski  
He makes it to school by the skin of his teeth.

[00:36:49.220] - Lisa Qualls  
And his parents going, phew!

[00:36:51.880] - Jessica Sinarski  
Exactly. And so I think it's a peek into a grumpy morning that I think we can all relate to, probably on multiple sides of it. So we can relate as the parents of the kid being grumpy, but we've also all had our own what I call porcupine moments in the morning when we just don't like just don't talk to me until I've had my coffee or I have a little quiet or I get my upstairs brain back online. And so anyway, the the book walks through a morning like that and shows some of the ways that the elephants are PACEful with Riley, but in the typical like bright colors and engaging dialog for kids to be able to to want to read it and for parents to hopefully see themselves in the story. I got the most important approval, which was from my seven year old. As we're reading it, he's like, mom, that's like us, because there are some, there are multiple things in the story that we do. Yeah, buddy, I've been real PACEful with you.

[00:38:00.010] - Lisa Qualls  
Yeah. Yeah.

[00:38:02.860] - Jessica Sinarski  
And then the afterword, much like the first Riley the Brave book goes into some things that I think will be really helpful to parents and professionals who are working with their kiddos, moving beyond survival. I know a lot of the times it feels like just surviving the morning, but those transitions can be so tough and I think this year, especially, this is a timely topic because our kids may be struggling even more because there's been less practice over the last year and a half with transitions. And so there's a lot of support, both in story form and then in the afterword for everyone involved in the life of a child.

[00:38:40.840] - Lisa Qualls  
Yeah, I think it's just wonderful. I was so honored to write an endorsement for it, and I'm a big believer and just love Riley the Brave. And the the books are a fantastic resource for families. I also think if you would like to give a teacher you know a gift, these books and especially the one about making it to school, of course, it's very school focused. But either of these books would just be a fantastic gift for any teacher, anybody who works with kids. Yeah, I encourage all of you listening to check out Riley the Brave Makes it to School and the first book, Riley, is it just Riley the Brave?

[00:39:19.810] - Jessica Sinarski  
It is Riley the Brave.

[00:39:19.900] - Lisa Qualls  
Riley the Brave. Well, thank you so much for being here and I'm just thrilled. I can't wait to see how well Riley the Brave Makes it to School is going to do and how much it's going to help families.

[00:39:32.730] - Jessica Sinarski  
Thanks so much, Lisa. I really appreciate it.

[00:39:40.750] - Melissa Corkum  
I love how Jessica talked about Pace and she talks about being PACEful with our kids, but she also mentioned being PACEful with ourselves. I know that this has been a really important part of conversations that I've been able to have with big people who get our journey. And when I get that PACE back, especially that acceptance of my experience, the curiosity, the empathy, not questions, not judgment, sometimes even suggestions for fixing don't feel helpful, like I just need that safe place that has felt really great to me. So I think it's important to remember that that same PACEfulness that we can use with our kids, we can also give to each other.

[00:40:37.080] - Lisa Qualls  
And you know, that reminds me, earlier in this episode, we mentioned our new webinar specifically for

dads, and you may be listening to this after that has already happened or you may be listening now and thinking, wow, I wish I had more support. So I just want to mention that we have specific support for dads in the village, which is our community, where we provide post adoption resources and support. Of course, we have lots of resources for moms, but we want to be sure you all know we have resources specifically for dads. So if you are interested in that, please go to [theadoptionconnection.com/village](http://theadoptionconnection.com/village) to get more information. Well, we are big fans of Jessica and her books. If you want to find her books, you can find them anywhere books are sold. If you want to learn more about Jessica or connect with her, go to her website, [BraveBrains.com](http://BraveBrains.com), or you can find her on Instagram at [Jessica Sinarski](https://www.instagram.com/JessicaSinarski). Also, be sure to go back and listen to the previous episode where she was our guest, which was Episode 107. You can find all of this information and more in today's show notes, which you can find at [theadoptionconnection.com/140](http://theadoptionconnection.com/140).

[00:41:57.300] - Melissa Corkum

Before you go, we'd love to connect with you on social media. You can find us on Instagram as [@theadoptionconnection](https://www.instagram.com/theadoptionconnection) or better yet, join our free Facebook community at [theadoptionconnection.com/facebook](http://theadoptionconnection.com/facebook).

[00:42:10.980] - Lisa Qualls

Thanks so much for listening, we love having you. And remember, you're a good parent doing good work.

[00:42:20.280] - Melissa Corkum

The music for the podcast is called New Day and was created by Lee Rosevere.