Today’s piece was prepared by Maithri Sarangam, MD, based on a New York Times article [The ‘Problem Child’ Is a Child, Not a Problem](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/24/opinion/collaborative-problem-solving-children.html).

This article explores the efficacy of Collaborative Problem Solving, unfortunately acronymized as CPS, conceived by Ross Greene, PhD, as an effective approach for behavior modification for children with disruptive behaviors. It is also called “Collaborative and Proactive Solutions.” To quote the article, “C.P.S. replaces a traditional philosophy of ‘children do well when they want to’ with one that ‘children do well when they can.’” It asks that parents and educators recognize disruptive behaviors as a sign of an underlying struggle, and to work with children to address these struggles, without blindly and programmatically punishing the behavior.

The article uses the time-honored approach of personal success stories, including one from a woman who is both a mother and a teacher. In describing only successful stories, it certainly paints this approach in a unanimously positive light. The article does, however, give fair warning about the long-term perseverance and commitment needed for any behavioral modification. It does not offer this as a glamorous quick-fix. Another positive aspect of this article is its inclusion of a teacher, someone society would generally see as being “good with children,” confronted with behavioral issues in her child. It does not blame parents for creating a child struggling with these behaviors, which may have impacted their willingness to seek help. The article briefly touches on the issue of resources needed to support parents in advocating for their children at school, and the unfortunate reality that many parents may not have these. Unfortunately, it does not go into the research backing this approach, which may have appealed to the more data-driven parents.

**RESOURCES ON COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING:**

[Lives In The Balance](Livesinthebalance.org) *Designed to foster collaboration and empathy to heighten awareness of the detrimental and counterproductive effects of punitive interventions, and to address the systemic issues that impede our progress.*

[ThinkKids](thinkkids.org) *Ross Greene’s “explosive child” source*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!

These websites have links to multiple peer reviewed articles.