



## COMMON SENSE PARENTING® FROM THE CHILDREN'S HOME OF CINCINNATI

Written by Kateri Kosta · Photography by Nathaniel West

About a year ago, Young Professionals Board member Mandy Peck and her husband J were searching for better ways to deal with their son Jax's behavior. Mandy describes Jax as a kid with a lot of energy and creativity who loves playing outside. "He's a pretty typical kid—sweet, loving, and playful," she says. But Jax started having meltdowns and tantrums that seemed to come out of nowhere. "J and I came to a point where we didn't know what else to do," says Mandy, "we were concerned because we couldn't seem to prevent these meltdowns." Techniques like "time-out" to manage behavior were sometimes helpful, but didn't prevent meltdowns in the long term. The Pecks saw their son becoming increasingly unhappy and knew they needed to do something to help Jax.

Around that time, Mandy learned about Common Sense Parenting®, an off-shoot of The Teaching Family Model®, which is an evidence-based behavior modification practice that teaches children to improve their behavior and social skills. The Children's Home is one of only 16 sites in North America to have completed the rigorous Teaching Family Model® certification process. The Common Sense Parenting® program takes the school-based behavior modification techniques of The Teaching Family Model® and applies them to the family structure. It provides parents with a menu of proven techniques to help prevent and correct misbehavior by teaching self-control and establishing behavioral expectations.

"We sat down with staff at The Children's Home and talked about what was going on. Jax is a good kid and parenting doesn't come with an instruction manual, so we needed some tools," says Mandy. One of the first issues the Pecks explored with Common Sense Parenting® techniques was Jax's difficulty accepting "no" for an answer in day-to-day situations, a common meltdown trigger.

Common Sense Parenting® taught Mandy and J to explain their behavioral expectations to Jax and even rehearse the appropriate response together to help him learn positive new ways to behave when he doesn't get his way. The final step with almost every technique is always to offer praise and recognition as reinforcement when Jax uses the skills he's learned from his parents. Now when Mandy says, "No, you can't play outside right now," Jax knows exactly what to do—first, he needs to look at his mom. Then he should calmly say "okay" to show that he's listening and accepting her answer.

"This and other Common Sense Parenting® techniques offered by The Children's Home have really improved our relationship with Jax and even helped our marriage." Now J and Mandy are on the same page as far as parenting styles which has eliminated a lot of stress. They observed a clear, quick change in Jax's day-to-day behavior, and they've noticed that since they set up consistent behavioral expectations, he rarely has a meltdown. "We're all happier," says Mandy. ❖

For more information on The Children's Home of Cincinnati, The Teaching Family Model®, or Common Sense Parenting®, call 513.272.2800 or email [childrenshome@thechildrenshomecinti.org](mailto:childrenshome@thechildrenshomecinti.org). You can also visit [www.thechildrenshomecinti.org](http://www.thechildrenshomecinti.org) for more details.