

Expert Q&A: Tameika Meadows

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Leanne Page: I am super excited to have Tameika Meadows today. She has a website that I have shared with you guys before, called I Love ABA! We'll put all the links up and I'll let you tell us what we can find there and how it can help any parents. But thank you for being here, if you just want to introduce yourself and tell us your professional side, but also as a mom, where you're at as a parent too.

Tameika Meadows: Well, thank you so much for having me. I am a BCBA in Georgia. I have been working in the field itself for about 12 years and then I was certified about four to five years ago. I primarily do in home, I primarily work with the little itty bitties. Most of my kids are under five on my case load. That's where my career interest and my research interest is. And as a mommy, I have an eight year old. She is a lovely attention seeker. So I get to use a lot of this really cool stuff in my household on a regular basis. We have schedules, we have a token board, we have all the cool magical tools that make the day flow the way you need the day to flow.

Tameika Meadows: I am a fan of not just going to work and talking about this stuff and putting all these things on parents that are unrealistic. I'm a fan of saying hey, here's what I do and here's what this looks like in real life. When you have to do laundry, and answer emails, and you have a phone call, what are you supposed to do with them? So I'm a fan of those kind of tips and strategies because that's real life. And I don't expect anybody to be perfect because I'm not perfect. So as long as I feel like we keep that in mind as professionals, then we'll really be helping families and parents to do what they need to do for their kids basically.

Leanne Page: Yeah. That's awesome. It's reality. You don't need to have a five page behavior plan when you're trying to do the laundry.

Tameika Meadows: And honestly it'll be a little difficult with an arm full of tide and a basket. It'll be a little hard. So I don't like to set people up for failure.

Leanne Page: And I think that's what people complained about the most about our field and our profession is that it's too scientific. It's not attainable. You can't do it in real life, but you can. We just need to find better ways to teach people how to do it.

Tameika Meadows: Absolutely. And just understanding that every household is different. I'm sure your household runs differently from my household and vice versa so what I might do over here might now work for you. And so I can't come into your house and expect you to just do everything the way I say. No, I have to come in and say, "Okay, for your house, tell me how this works," and then I have to come up with something that works for that.

Leanne Page: And what worked last week might not work this week.

Tameika Meadows: Exactly. There's that too.

Leanne Page: You gotta be a little bit flexible.

Tameika Meadows: You definitely got to be flexible. Yes.

Leanne Page: As a parent in your own house, what are your favorite ways to use ABA? What do you use the most often?

Tameika Meadows: I feel like in some ways, she makes it easy for me. I'm probably super biased, but I happen to think that escape motivated kids are a little bit harder to motivate because so much of what they want to do is not what you want them to do in that moment. So for her, she's an A baby. So her biggest thing is time with me, smiles from me, praise from me, and I just pour it out like butter. I pour it all over what I need her to do.

Tameika Meadows: When she's doing the right thing and she's cleaning her room and if I've said that you need to get your homework done and if I see her doing that, oh my god, we have a praise party. And I'm just like, "Oh my god, look at that! Wow, you're so amazing." And she just eats it up, she loves it and it works very, very well from her and on the flip side of that, when you're not doing what I told her to do and I said to put the toys over there and I come back and they're still not, you don't get that reaction from me. It's very quiet, my face looks very bored, and I just kind of point to what you're supposed to be doing. And she'll kind of be like, "Oh, oh, okay." And then she'll go do it and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, thank you so much. You're so helpful."

Tameika Meadows: So I use a lot of calling attention to what I want her to do versus saying over and over again, "Did you clean your room? Did you clean your room? Did you clean your room?" I don't need to do that. She can hear. It's not necessary. We've had tests, she can hear. So all I have to do is just when you're doing the right thing, make a big deal out of it. And when you're not, just make a very, very small deal out of showing you what you should be doing.

Leanne Page: That's perfect. Especially since you know she likes the attention, if you stood there and said, "Put the toys away and I told you a million times," and even if you're being mean and angry and mean mommy, you're still giving all that attention.

Tameika Meadows: I'm still giving attention. And she might decide in her mind, "You know what, this isn't so bad." So maybe sometimes I do it and sometimes I don't, but either way you come in here and you talk to me so it's tempting in the moment, especially when it's early morning, you're trying to get out of the door, you said it, they're still not doing it, it's very tempting to just want to raise your voice and say, "Hey, I said," but then I just remind myself, "No, no, no, no. We're not doing that." And I just show her what I need her to do.

Tameika Meadows: There's certain things she has a task analysis for, which is basically like a little written list of what you need to do and what order. Things that I found that she consistently does out of order, I'll make her a list. I'll write it out. Here's what you do. You do this, and then you do this, and so I take away the need for me to be physically in the room guiding you through the process because I don't have time to do that. So I can be off in another part of the house doing what I need to do and you have your list. And then when I come and I check if it matches the list, awesome. Awesome sauce. And we're gonna have a praise party because you did what I needed you to do.

Leanne Page: That's awesome. I love the term praise party [crosstalk 00:06:35]

Tameika Meadows: I do too. I use that with my staff too. That's how I want them to think about it. Like as excited as you would be at a birthday party, that's how excited you should be when you're giving praise. Like no one wants to hear, "Oh, Tameika, that was terrific."

Leanne Page: Cool. Good job.

Tameika Meadows: Who wants to hear that? Yeah, good job. Good job. That's not gonna get it. No.

Leanne Page: I think as parents we do a good job of that with potty training. It makes me think of potty training, potty parties. I think that all of us do a good job of that. Like, "Yay! A potty!" And then we kind of go back to that, "Okay, cook, good job, thanks for cleaning up."

Tameika Meadows: Yeah, we forget that it's ... Or we think, well, that's what he or she should do so why do I have to go all out for something that you're supposed to do anyway? But all of us do things to contact reinforcement. We all have our own different things that we like, things that we appreciate. And when people stop giving that to us, just like the kids we work with, we're gonna react to that. We're gonna say, "Hey, did you like my report? You didn't send me that email letting me know you like my report. You normally do that." So just like these kids, we seek out approval, we seek out attention, we seek out feedback, it's no different.

Leanne Page: Yeah. And I like too how you said you pour it out on her when she's getting [crosstalk 00:07:51] seek it out.

Tameika Meadows: Oh yeah. Because you don't want that.

Leanne Page: Because that could go the wrong way. That could go really badly.

Tameika Meadows: That'll get annoying very fast. And sometimes when it's just crazy at work and I have a lot going on and I forget, she reminds me. And then it's like I can't be upset with you because that's my fault. I haven't been giving it enough and so now you're having to seek it, that's my fault. And so then I change my behavior instead of trying to change her behavior.

Leanne Page: Yeah. That's it. That's everything. Change my behavior. That's it, you nailed it, we're done. So what about for your clients? What's your most common piece of parenting advice or tips that you give clients that you work with?

Tameika Meadows: My favorite strategy, and I'm just gonna be real transparent and say it's my favorite because I'm a list maker, it keeps me sane. So my favorite strategy is some type of a schedule. Depending on the child, how they learn, where they are cognitively, it could be visual, which will make it a visual schedule, it could be written, which would make it more of a checklist. But it is my favorite thing to put in place because what I find most of the time with my clients because I work with the young ones, is they spend their days just being free, just doing whatever. I'm gonna bounce on the couch. And then about two, I'm gonna have some juice. And then about three, I'm gonna bounce on that chair. And that's their day.

Tameika Meadows: And it's like, okay, how's that working? Is that working out well? And the parents are usually like, "No, it's horrible, and the house is always dirty, and I can't take a phone call. I miss my spouse. It's horrible." And I'm like, "Okay, then let's put a schedule in place and let's let this child know what to expect from their day, when are things happening." They don't need to ask you over and over if you tell them, "We're not gonna go get ice cream until two o'clock." There's no need for you to ask me every five seconds when are we gonna have ice cream. Check your schedule. That's when.

Tameika Meadows: And so it just ... It makes things calm and orderly. And I love things that take the weight off the parents. So you don't have to entertain your children all day, they have a schedule to follow, and they can keep themselves busy, and they can pick their own activities. It is my favorite strategy. Hands down.

Leanne Page: So if they are little kids at home, what kind of things are on the schedule if you're not going out and doing things all day, what do you put on there?

Tameika Meadows: I like to booby trap it with things that build skills. Now this is not required. That's how I like to do it. So with my little ones, we might have something like stacking blocks, we might have a little art basket. So maybe they have crayons, and paper, and markers if we're working on those fine motor skills. So I want you to color. We might have a puzzles container because we're working on your visual skills so you're putting puzzles together. They don't have to be things that are boring.

Tameika Meadows: A lot of my parents think, "Oh, well I gotta go buy flashcards." No. No you don't. Just grab stuff you already have around the house. Put them in containers, or baskets, or tubs, and organize them somewhere. And then just put it on the schedule. One o'clock go do your puzzles. 1:30, go do your art time. And you teach them how to follow their daily schedule.

Tameika Meadows: I guarantee you, there's already a ton of things they're supposed to do every day. They just happen in a hazard fashion is usually what I find. Like they're supposed to brush their teeth every day and they might do that somewhere around lunch time because we don't feel like fighting with you to brush your teeth. Okay, how about if

we put that on the schedule with a little cute little toothbrush and a cute little picture of toothpaste. So now it makes it more fun to brush my teeth because it's like, "Oh, look, it's on your schedule, let's go brush your teeth." And so it means it's fun and exciting instead of being like, "Alright, come on, it's time to go brush your teeth and I hate this part of the day because you make it dreadful." Let's turn that around and make it exciting for the child and get it out of the way. And then we put something fun right behind it so now you're a little bit more excited to get it over with because after teeth brush time, we're gonna watch Despicable Me. Who doesn't want to do that? And so it just helps parents keep their sanity throughout the day when there's all these things that have to get done in a very short amount of time to get them done.

Leanne Page: I love that. I love ... I was gonna ask about organizing things but you already said it. And it's less of the having just the free range. Don't go look in my playroom right now.

Tameika Meadows: Yes, just stuff everywhere and they're engaging in problem behavior, they're throwing toys, they're pulling their sister's hair. Let's give them something to do. Something to be productive with their time.

Leanne Page: Yeah. And none of those things you said are boring. Like you said, we're not talking flashcards and work books.

Tameika Meadows: No, not all, it could be fun stuff. Totally fine. It can be ... You can roll dough and you can give them a little ... I like sensory tubs. So you can put some water in a little tub, throw some food coloring in there to make a cool color, put in some stuff that floats, put some bubbles in it, twirl it up a little bit. Now we got like this water playground thing going on. Who doesn't want to play with that? That's fun. So it doesn't have to be something boring. Not at all.

Leanne Page: And they'll stay engaged in that a lot longer than if you just said go play toys and they're gonna play with something for three minutes and put it down and move on. But if you have this activity that's on a schedule, you might actually get 30 solid minutes of play, which is learning for them [crosstalk 00:13:25]

Tameika Meadows: Yeah, absolutely. [crosstalk 00:13:25] We're sneaking them in there at the same time, I love it.

Leanne Page: Yeah. And having things organized, having the environment organized and arranged also helps build that communication still having to request the tubs from mom. Mom and dad are in control of all the fun stuff so you have to obey.

Tameika Meadows: Yes. Exactly.

Leanne Page: And you snuck in a whole bunch of stuff in one plan. A schedule.

- Tameika Meadows: I usually hear from the ones who put it into play, some variation of, "Oh my gosh, this was the best thing ever." That's usually the response. And I'm like, "I told you." I promise I'm not gonna steer you wrong. I recommend it because it can be life changing. In some households where all day long they're just kind of floating from one problem behavior to the next, it can really be life changing.
- Leanne Page: To make a picture schedule, do people need to purchase software or how do you do this-
- Tameika Meadows: No, not at all. It can be so simple. I like to ... During parent training, it's something I like to show them. Because I like to do strategies where I can show the parent how to do it. So after that you just know. I don't like to make it for you and then show up and say, "Okay, here's your schedule." I like to say, "Okay, get a poster board, get some markers, take pictures of everything before I see you again. Just follow your child around and take pictures. And the next time I come, we're gonna make a visual schedule." And we just cut out pictures and we put them on the poster board. And I mean we decorate it, we make it look cute because I like stuff to look cute. And then we find somewhere to put it in the home and then we teach the child to follow it.
- Tameika Meadows: Most of the time when they see us making it, they're already kind of curious. And so by the time we put it up and we're like, "This is for you," they're usually like, "Oh my god, this is mine?" Like yup, this is yours now. And this is your day. And we're gonna go over it. And we're gonna follow it. Do you want to do the pictures, you can take the pictures off, you can put the pictures on. So usually that age group of two to five, they're very fascinated by things like that and that ownership of this is for me. So it's usually not a difficult process to teach them to follow it. As long as they get something out of it. They gotta get some kind of payoff. We all like to get a payoff when we do things. So as long as you're booby trapping it with stuff that they love. Like I said, we watch your favorite movie and then oh, look, we're gonna get an ice cream at two o'clock. And oh, at five o'clock, mommy and daddy are gonna read you a story. It's completely 100 percent your time. As long as you booby trap it, it shouldn't be very hard to teach them to follow it.
- Leanne Page: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And for older kiddos then you can just have a written out list and make sure the same thing, the payoff is in there. There's a reward either at the end of the list or every third or fourth thing is something fun.
- Tameika Meadows: Exactly. And it can be more age appropriate. Like myself, parents of older kids, I will literally show them to do lists that I make for work because I make them all the time. And I'll say, "Here's the stuff in the middle that I really don't want to do." So I kind of bury it, in the middle, and I put the stuff at the top that I really like to do. And because I know for myself, I don't like to start off my day doing the most dreaded part of my day. I don't jump out of bed and say, "Let me finish that 15 page report." I don't do that, maybe someone else does. But I like to say I'm gonna check my email, gonna make a big cup of coffee, I'm gonna chat with my friend, oh, and then I'll knock out that report.

Tameika Meadows: So I like to bury it under some things that are more fun. But then once I knock it out and I get it done, then I might say something like, oh and then I'll go get a manicure. So right after it, I get to do another fun thing. That's my motivation to get it over with. Because I can't go get that manicure until I finish that report because it's due tomorrow. So I try to explain to them how to booby trap it for success and that could be eventually generalized into a journal that they take to school with them.

Tameika Meadows: Nowadays with all this technology you can get a scheduling app on their phone or their tablet. But there's so many ways to go with that that are completely age appropriate. They're not babyish. Because that's an older kid, we don't want to show up with a visual schedule. They're gonna be like, "Okay, I'm not a baby." There's so many ways to make it appropriate for an older individual and help them organize their day.

Leanne Page: Yeah, and for us too.

Tameika Meadows: I love to do this.

Leanne Page: It works for us.

Tameika Meadows: If I don't have one or if I go to the grocery store and I realize I forgot my list, oh it's not gonna end well. It's not. I'm gonna come home with 35 packages of cookies or something because it's like, I can't think. It's like I know I wrote some stuff down but I don't remember what so let's just buy stuff. It doesn't go well.

Leanne Page: Yeah, I'm right there with you. And I think that you're teaching some self-monitoring for the older kiddos [crosstalk 00:18:34]

Tameika Meadows: Absolutely.

Leanne Page: But your modeling it for them and showing them how you do it. So you're doing a million different behavioral strategies in one with the key being here preventing problems.

Tameika Meadows: Yes. Before it even happens.

Leanne Page: But they know it's coming, they don't need to freak out about it. Or if I know I want attention from mom and I can look at my schedule and see read with mom is two things down, I don't need to flip out right now. I can finish my puzzles and my Play-Doh and then we get to read together.

Tameika Meadows: Exactly. Because I think sometimes as professionals, we forget how little of their day our clients have control over. And I mean, me too, I'm in that category. I forget sometimes that I'm like, "Well, why do they do that when they want someone's attention. Okay, well, do they know how to get attention? Maybe not." So in their mind, kicking and screaming on the floor works pretty good whereas I might just say I might call up a friend, they might text a friend. They don't know how to do those

things. And so we have to teach it. And then they'll stop doing these other behaviors that we don't like and they'll start doing these other behaviors that work just as well. Most of the time better. And it doesn't take as much effort and physical work as a tantrum does.

Leanne Page: Yeah. Makes it easier on everybody. Not just mom and dad. [crosstalk 00:19:51] easier on the kiddo too.

Tameika Meadows: Absolutely. And if it's easier on them, they'll do it. That's how humans work, we do what's easy.

Leanne Page: Yeah. That's perfect. What road blocks have you seen that parents face the most and how do you help them overcome that?

Tameika Meadows: I think that the general idea of help equals doing it for you is one that I deal with a lot because, again, for me specifically, I'm working with really little kids. So I'm sure you can relate when you were a new mom and this is your adorable little toddler who's perfect and I want to feed her and I want to put her clothes on and I'll give her a bath. It's okay. So sometimes it's a very delicate compromise and several conversations of okay, she's three, I promise you she can put her shoes on by herself. Or I promise you he can use a fork. You don't need to feed him.

Tameika Meadows: And what I do a lot is I remind these parents that they're gonna grow up one day. I know he's just two right now, he's super adorable. I get it. But he's gonna be 12, and then he's gonna be 22, and then he's gonna be 32. Do you want to feed him then? And they're like, "No, of course not." And I'm like, "Okay, if you do it now, he'll expect you to do it then." I know with typically developing children, they're big on independence, they're big on I want to do it by myself. Children with developmental disabilities, that's not always there. So if you're gonna feed me and you're gonna wipe my mouth, okay, I'll let you. As long as you want to I will let you.

Tameika Meadows: And so I deal a lot with kind of helping parents get over that discomfort of this is my baby. And he's so young. And oh my gosh, I don't know if I want him to dress himself, I don't know if I want him to brush his own teeth. So I deal with a lot of that which is completely understandable. And we just ... We work through it slowly. I don't try to get them to rip the bandaid off in one session. I give it as much time as they need. I say, "Okay, then you tell me what you're comfortable with for now." And we'll teach that. And then when we teach that, I say, "Okay, do you wanna go more? Do you wanna stay here?"

Tameika Meadows: And typically once they start to see the independence in their own child, they say to me, "No, let's work on some more stuff. I kind of like that. I kind of like that I don't have to give her a bath anymore. I can just put her in the water. I have her do her body parts. I point to them. And then I can just sit back a little bit. It's kind of nice." I'm like, "Yeah, it is nice isn't it? Let's do more of that."

Tameika Meadows: And so it's just ... It's a gradual process. I'm not trying to have anyone change their entire life over night. I wouldn't appreciate someone doing that to me. So we baby step it. But it can be a barrier. It can definitely be a barrier and so it's something that we have to address head on as soon as we start working together.

Leanne Page: Yeah. I love that. It's baby steps. We're not trying to change everything [inaudible 00:22:53] that's everything [crosstalk 00:22:54] parents and with ABA. Let's give you nuggets of the science at a time and let's just build on it a little bit at a time. We're shaping our own behavior here.

Tameika Meadows: Yeah, exactly. It's shaping. Because I ... Different things that I do, if someone showed up and said, "Okay, I've decided you're not gonna do that anymore," I'd have a problem with that. And so instead, I kind of ... I connect it to the goals that they tell me they want. So if you're telling me that one day you want him to be this member of society and you want him to have a job, okay, well, what do you think we need to do to get there? Because there's a road between those two points. Where he is now and where you're wanting him to be one day. So I'm here to help you walk him down that road. And I just keep reminding them because it's very hard sometimes that the more you do now, the more we teach now, you're not gonna have to teach it later. Because he or she will already know how to do it. You're not gonna struggle at six, seven, eight, 10 with teeth brushing like a lot of parents do. Let's get that out of the way now and then we don't have to worry about that when he is much bigger and much stronger and can protest much more vigorously. Let's work on that now when he's small and little.

Leanne Page: Yeah. I love that. That learned helplessness is something that we hear a lot in the special needs world, special education, that sort of thing. And we don't want that. We don't want to teach them to be helpless. We want to teach them [crosstalk 00:24:26]

Tameika Meadows: No, because they're not helpless. They're capable of learning so much so if you're capable and you can learn it, why not teach it to you?

Leanne Page: Mm-hmm (affirmative). That's exactly right. I love that. That's something I hadn't even thought about as a roadblock, honestly. That's why I love doing these 'cause [crosstalk 00:24:43] I hadn't even thought of that. I need to hear from you. I need all the baby steps for myself.

Tameika Meadows: [inaudible 00:24:52]

Leanne Page: We're all on a road.

Tameika Meadows: Yes we do.

Leanne Page: Believe you step in it somewhere. What about positive reinforcements? So what's the easiest way for parents to get more positive reinforcement into their day, into their lives?

Tameika Meadows: It's a big word, but I'll define it. It's contingencies and a contingency is basically an if then. So if you do, then I'll do. And with many of the parents that I work with, the trap that they find themselves in is saying, "Well, Tameika, she won't work for anything. She doesn't have any reinforcers." And when we do some digging, what we usually find is that all their reinforcers are free. So it's not that they don't have any, it's that they just get them for doing nothing. They just ... People hand them everything. They don't have to work for anything. So it makes perfect sense that when you now put a demand on it they're like, "I'm not doing that. Oh, I'll just wait until daddy gets home because he'll give me the ice cream. I don't know what you're talking about but I am not eating my peas. I'll just wait and then I'll get my ice cream."

Tameika Meadows: So I teach parents about contingencies. You have to make it cost something. It doesn't have to be something big, but it needs to cost something. So for most of my kiddos, these devices are what they want probably 101 percent of the time. And so when they come up to us in whatever way they communicate, they're trying to get that phone, I'll say, "Okay, so right now, what can she do to get that phone?" And the parents will be like, "Oh, I don't know. Do I need to go grab something?" And then I'll say, "Give me a high five." And the child gives me a high five. Okay, give her your phone. And so it's something small, but it cost something. And so now you're starting to teach them things aren't free. If you want something, then you need to do something.

Tameika Meadows: And that's how you get a child who is not only compliant. But with a lot of my older clients, they'll start asking for stuff to do. That's what mines does. She's learned over time. She'll come up to me and she'll be like, "Can I clean your room?" Or, "Can I sweep the kitchen?" And I'll be like, "Okay." And then she'll come back and say, "So, I was thinking," and then that's when we get to what she want. But she's learned that. She's learned you don't just come up to me and ask for stuff. Are you doing your chores? Did you do your homework? Did you read your science books? She's learned that because we do it all the time. And so I try to teach the same thing to the parents that I work with that if you give everything away for free, they're gonna have a really hard time getting your child to do stuff throughout the day. I mean, why? Why would they?

Leanne Page: Yeah, and that goes right back to your visual schedules and organizing the environment. If all the fun stuff is down low and free and everywhere, all the favorite toys and activities, then that's all free like you're saying. And so they need to be in mom's control so that I can have a contingency.

Tameika Meadows: Absolutely.

Leanne Page: Because I'm not even in control of it physically and I say, "Oh, you need to pick up your room," they're gonna be like, "Okay, I'm gonna go play with that right there."

Tameika Meadows: Right. Exactly. And then that's when you get those highly defiant kids where everything's a battle. And I mean it could be the smallest demand of, "Okay, you

want to go outside? Well put your shoes on first." "I don't want to put my shoes on." And it's like, that didn't happen over night. That was a process of many days put together where there was no requirement to go outside. And so now they were adding a requirement, makes perfect sense. They're gonna push back against that. And so the way that you stop that from forming in the first place is you make sure that the things that they love the most, typically nowadays it's their electronics, it might be going somewhere outside of the home, getting to buy a new toy, they have to cost something. Don't just give it to them for free or you'll have a very hard time getting them to do what you need them to do.

Leanne Page: So if you ... If a parent is in the situation where everything is free right now, how do we transition to being in control and having those contingencies? So should I go put all the toys away or should I just get the favorite ones first?

Tameika Meadows: I would start with whatever part of the day is the hardest. For a lot of the families I work with, it's that morning routine, trying to get out of the door by 7:30, we gotta drop the kids off, I gotta get to work. That is usually the hardest part of the day. Link those things to that part of the day. So you get up, you make your bed, you just earned this. Then you go in the bathroom, you wash your face, you just earned this. And so they need to start understanding that I do, I get, I do, I get. That's how you get a child who is compliant, and not only compliant, but will seek out the opportunity to do things on their own. Which is really what we want.

Tameika Meadows: Parents say to me that they want compliance and I always remind them, not really. Because what you're really asking me for is you want your child to spontaneously do what they need to do. You don't want to follow them around all day like a drill sergeant saying, "Pick that up, put that down," that's really not what you want. And they say, "Oh, you're right, I don't want that." So what we want from these kids is if you see your room is dirty, clean it up. If you see me coming in the door struggling with grocery bags, come help me. I don't want to have to ask you to do these things, I want you to do them on your own and that's how you get them to that point because they know in their head, the last time I helped her, I got to do something really fun after that. Or she gave me a huge hug and she said, "You are such a big helper, thank you so much," and that made me feel good so I think I'll do that again. That's how you help them make that connection.

Leanne Page: Yes. That's perfect. So baby steps to get there [crosstalk 00:30:53] the hardest part of your day, the hardest situation and have the best reinforcers, the best [crosstalk 00:30:58]

Tameika Meadows: Yes. Absolutely. And you will be amazed at the change in your child when they make that connection of I don't get that thing, whatever it is, until I do this. So I might as well do this so that I can get that thing. It's amazing. I have been doing this for a very long time and it still amazes me sometimes. Especially when it's a very, very oppositional child and then I just kind of watch this transformation begin to happen. And I'm like, "Wow, hi, nice to meet you, I'm Tameika." Because I feel like I'm

meeting them now for the first time. Because all that previous stuff, that wasn't really them, that was just learned behavior. So now I'm really getting to meet them.

Leanne Page: I love that. That's perfect. That's what we're doing here. We're using these strategies to help them be themselves.

Tameika Meadows: Exactly. Who they really are which is just cool kids. Just be a cool kid. Clean your room.

Leanne Page: [inaudible 00:31:55] and I'll give you all the fun stuff.

Tameika Meadows: Exactly. I promise. Your life will get better. Just clean your room.

Leanne Page: Yeah. Just be nice about it. Clean your room. Well this is perfect. Thank you so much for kind of [crosstalk 00:32:09] big ideas, but how to get there in more concrete ways.

Tameika Meadows: Thank you, this has been so fun.

Leanne Page: We don't have to change everything like you said, we're not switching stuff over night. Nobody's gonna do that.

Tameika Meadows: I wouldn't do that. I wouldn't do that.

Leanne Page: No, it's the little steps at a time. Is there anything else that I didn't ask that you wanted to share with us?

Tameika Meadows: I would just say for parents who are in the process right now where they're working with a team, there's a lot of behaviors being addressed, there's a lot of things that are being worked on, I know that for my clients it is always so hard in those initial stages. They're wondering is this gonna work? Can I trust this? Oops, it got a little bit worse before it got better, I don't know that I was prepared for that. And I feel like for professionals, that's always kind of the easy part because it's like, okay, I wrote my neat, pretty little plan, now let's all go do it. That's the hardest part for the parent. Because it's one thing to ask for help. It's another thing completely to have to start implementing that help. So I would say hang in there. 100 percent, it does get better, this stuff does work. The reason why we can recommend it is because we know it works. We know that it's effective. It's not easy, and I'm not going to lie to you and say that it is, but it does work.

Tameika Meadows: So if you're willing to kind of roll up your sleeves, and get sweaty, and get frustrated, and do that hard work, I promise you the payoff is that you no longer have to deal with these kinds of behaviors. And then life just gets easier. And I feel like we all want our life to get easier. And I love helping people get to a point where their life is easier. That's reinforcing for me. So I would say just hang in there. Just hang in there.

Leanne Page: That's the best advice. It will get easier and that will seem good for everybody.

Tameika Meadows: It will. And it just ... Your household will flow in a more smooth manner. It won't just ... It won't feel like chaos. And I know that when I get home from work, I don't want to walk into chaos. I don't know about you, I don't enjoy that. I want to walk into tranquility. So I want to help other parents do that too.

Leanne Page: That's awesome. So before I let you go, tell us about the I love ABA! Blog and do you have stuff for parents on there or is it just [crosstalk 00:34:32]?

Tameika Meadows: Sure. It is a little bit of both. When I first started the blog, it probably was much more geared towards professionals because it really started as just a way for me to blab about what I do all day. That was it. And then I started getting a lot of input and feedback from parents in parts of the world who don't have the privilege to just be able to call up a company and say, "Hey, we want some therapy." And they started asking me, "What's this word mean? And what is this thing you were talking about? And I don't understand what reinforcement is." And then that's when I realized, oh, I should probably start explaining some of these terms I just keep throwing around and thinking everyone knows. And so there's tons of information on there for parents, caregivers, teachers. If you're an SLP and you have kids on your case load with behavior issues. If you are ... I have a lot of school psychologists who contact me and say that, "I read your blog because I have these individuals that I work with and I don't really know how to create strategies for them. I don't know what kind of interventions would be effective."

Tameika Meadows: So I would say it's accessible to a wide audience as long as you want to understand behavior a little bit better, you're good. You'll find something in there that will be of use to you. There's a resource section that I try to keep for things that are free or downloadable. There's a store if you want to purchase teaching tools or training downloads. There's a link to a video site if you want to actually feel like I'm sitting at your kitchen table and we're talking about something. You can have that experience now. Even if you don't live anywhere near me, you're able to access that kind of information that I literally Monday through Friday give to my clients at their kitchen tables. That's what we do when I go to their houses. So there's a little bit of something for everyone I would say.

Leanne Page: Yeah. And I would say the videos do feel like you're at the kitchen table. They don't feel like you're being lectured by a professor or anything.

Tameika Meadows: [crosstalk 00:36:49]

Leanne Page: They're very accessible so I [crosstalk 00:36:50] recommend them to parents for sure. And our members have definitely seen before because I do post links from your site that go along with what module we're working on so [crosstalk 00:37:03] learning. [crosstalk 00:37:05]

Tameika Meadows: Absolutely, I'm all about ... Being a BCBA just means you're a life long learner. It does not mean you know everything. And so I am all about finding new resources and

sharing them. And reading a book and saying, "Man, that book was amazing, I should share that on my blog." I am all about that.

Leanne Page: Thank you so much for your time.

Tameika Meadows: This was fun.

Leanne Page: I really enjoyed it. I love that you're saying a lot of the same things but you have different ways to apply them. And that's what it's about. Let's all figure out what works, what works for [crosstalk 00:37:36]

Tameika Meadows: Exactly. Exactly.

Leanne Page: So thank you so much, I appreciate it.

Tameika Meadows: Thank you, thank you.