

# When you need to ask for help

You want to be the perfect parent.

The type of parent who always wears a smile (and a clean shirt), never yells or cries, and who can do everything for everyone. And this should be done all by yourself.

But here's the truth - a perfect parent is a myth. No one can do everything for everyone. And we all need help.

Here are a few surefire signs you need to ask for help as a caregiver. (And yes, it's totally okay.)

## **You feel lost or hopeless.**

Being a parent can feel impossible at times. And there are times where you feel lost. But you can get back on track - with a little help.

Sometimes you can find help from people you know. And other times, you need to seek out the help of a professional.

"People have this idea about therapy, but the most important part of it is to learn things you haven't learned before," says Jennifer Best, certified family life educator with Iowa State University Extension. "Everybody has their own issues."



## **You need to stop a bad habit.**

If you have a hard time dealing with anger or stress, your children will see and learn to react in the same way. If you can't stop yelling, your children will model that behavior.

"We need to learn skills that we want to pass on to our kids," Jennifer explains.

As a parent, dealing with bad habits become more important than ever. Because those bad habits can become your children's bad habits. (And many times, our bad habits were learned in our childhood, too.)

## **You don't know what to do.**

Every parent can't possibly know everything. It's impossible to be an expert at all things parenting. At different stages of development, you'll have questions you'll need to ask. You may be perplexed by nursing, potty training, sleeping, education or discipline.

**now what? Keep Connecting.**

# When you need to ask for help

Think about your parenting support network like your own "team." Every teammate has different skills and knowledge, just like a baseball pitcher and an outfielder have different talents. Your team may include a tribe of friends and family, your partner, and professionals like doctors and teachers. Having this team makes you a better parent, because you can tap into the best of the best.

"Parents need perspective from others," says Jennifer Best, certified family life educator with Iowa State University Extension. "We're humans, not robots."

Susan Klingaman, early childhood mental health consultant at Robert Young Center, agrees. "Find someone who knows your child and knows you," she says.

## You need to get something off your chest.

There are times that you just need someone to listen or a shoulder to cry on. This is a clear sign that you need to ask for help.

It may be as simple as an hour of conversation over a cup of coffee. Sometimes you just need to lean on someone else.

now  
what?

KEEP CONNECTING.

Asking for help is nothing to be ashamed of, but it can take courage. These are only a few of the hundreds (or thousands) of signs that you may need help. But the bottom line is that parents need to rely on the support of others. And you must be aware of your own signs.

We aren't able to do it alone - even if wish we could. And by getting help from others, you are also becoming a better parent for your child.

.....  
*Originally posted on the Now What? Blog 1/21/16. The Now What? Blog served for nearly 7 years to*

- 1. Normalize parents seeking support and help as a manner of child abuse prevention*
- 2. Engage community in how they can work to prevent child abuse*
- 3. Work to build resiliency in families through promotion of the 5 protective factors*

*Maybe you coach a baseball team or you help care for the neighbor kids from time to time. You are investing in the safety and security of the children in our community. Because it truly does take a village to raise our children, we want to offer the tools needed to bring awareness and education to preventing child abuse.*

**now what? Keep Connecting.**

