

5 Parenting Myths--Busted

When you become a parent, it's as though you are suddenly wearing a sign that reads, "Tell me how I should raise my child."

Some of the advice is innocuous - "Sleep when the baby sleeps." (As though your house will clean itself and your laundry will fold and put itself away.)

But some things that people tell you (or imply) are best to be ignored. Here are five parenting myths we think should be busted!

Enjoy this time - it goes so fast.

Okay, so maybe this is true. It seems much too prevalent a sentiment to believe otherwise.

But some days seem to go on forever. There are messes and tears mixed in with joy and fun. There are days where we are just trying to make it to bedtime.

And that's okay. It's normal.

Parenting can be really hard work.

Just keep on doing your best and loving your children fiercely, and don't worry if you aren't enjoying every moment as much as your Great Aunt Joan tells you should be.

(And also, remember those long days in 40 years when you are about to share these words of wisdom with a new parent.)



Several well-meaning family members have told me, "Wait 'til you have kids." As though having children means you have to give up everything you do and enjoy today.

Always put your kids first.

But the opposite is actually true.

"You are better able to care for your kids when you care for yourself," says Sue Klingaman, early childhood mental health consultant at Robert Young Center.

This means it's even more important as a caregiver to go out dates, go out with friends, enjoy hobbies, eat right, and exercise.

Doing these things also provides a living example to your children of the importance of taking care of yourself first.

now what? Keep Going.

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Rely on your instincts - no training is necessary to be a parent.

Many experts would agree with the premise of this advice - as a caregiver, you are the expert on your own child.

But, it's also important to know when to ask for help.

"We can help our kids be resilient by being prepared," explains Jennifer Best, certified family life educator with Iowa State University Extension.

This means that when you notice something going on with your child or your family, it's your responsibility to reach out to specialists and support services you trust. By connecting with help right away, you can help your child before anything becomes a major issue.

"Everyone has problems," Jennifer says. "You didn't cause it, but it's your job as a caregiver to help children deal with issues."

If your kid throws a tantrum, you are doing something wrong.

As a caregiver, we've all felt the heat of judging eyes - in the parking lot at the museum, in the cereal aisle at the grocery store - reminding us that when our child is having a meltdown, it's our fault.

But the truth is, tantrums are a part of growing up.

"Tantrums are normal," says Jennifer. "I'd be more worried if a child didn't have temper tantrums."

We'll be back in a few weeks to discuss best ways to deal with those dreaded temper tantrums, but remember that tantrums happen for a lot of reasons and often center around frustration.

"Children are not born knowing how to be frustrated," Jennifer explains. "Tantrums are one way they show this emotion - and they are really just learning skills."

The best way to _____ is to _____.

If a sentence every starts with "the best way," you can probably ignore it. There is no cookie cutter guide to parenting. There is no guidebook.

"One size doesn't fit all," explains Sue. "Kids all have individual preferences and there is almost always more than one method for anything in parenting."

Instead, watch your child for cues and ask yourself what he or she needs.

"Asking what a child needs leads to less frustration as a parent," Sue says. This puts the control back into the hands of the caregiver.

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As a caregiver, we all receive more advice than we can handle. But there are times when the advice may not be best for our children or family.

now what? | **KEEP GOING.**

So, remember that people may think you are wearing a sign that says, "Tell me how I should raise my child." But that sign doesn't say you have to believe everything you are told. Choose wisely and be prepared to ignore words of wisdom that don't make sense to you.



Originally posted on the Now What? Blog on 9/10/14 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.

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