

# WHAT REALLY MATTERS



Parental performance is a very real and very stressful thing in the 21st century. Our grandparents were considered good parents if they kept their children quiet while adults were talking. Our parents were considered good parents if they taught us manners and we used them appropriately. But today's parents aren't considered good parents unless they are at every sporting event, every music concert, every theater performance, only buying organic food, crafting with the family, keeping an organized home, volunteering in the community, taking family vacations, and working a full-time job. And by the way, all of this must be documented on social media with everyone smiling and looking directly at the camera.

Who can measure up to that? It is no wonder most parents feel inadequate and unsatisfied. Now, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, parents are also supposed to have colorful charts that lay out the perfect schedule for their little ones so that they are stimulated, creative, active, and happy all while using this time of "social distancing" for parents to learn a new language, lose 10 pounds, finish reading the books piled on the nightstand, and get all of the home improvement projects complete. Oh, and did I mention that you also have to navigate working from home (if you are so lucky) while maintaining the regular business of day-to-day parenting?

All of that can lead to feelings of frustration, disappointment, and resentment from everyone in your home. Those feelings are like little messengers that are trying to tell you that things are not working and it's time to try something different.



---

Parents, now more than ever is the time to take a deep breath and ask yourself, “What really matters?” Take a hard look at your family, in your household, in your situation and ask, “What are the things that I can let go of and what are the things that I cannot?” It’s important that you take stock in your own situations while answering these questions or else you will be caught in the trap of doing what is best for those families on Facebook that look like they have it all together instead of what is best for you and the people that live in your houses (spoiler: Those Facebook people don’t have it all together).

Here are some prompts to help you get started:

- Doing school work is probably very important but does the time it is done really matter?
- Having enough quiet time to get your work done is probably very important so does letting your kiddo watch TV for an extra hour really matter?
- Everyone brushing their teeth every day is probably very important but does your 10-year-old taking a shower everyday really matter?
- Adequate sleep and wake times are probably very important but does it really matter if your 15-year-old stays up until 3:00am and sleeps until 11:00am?

These prompts are written as though school work, clean teeth, quiet time, and sleep are more important than other things but that is not the case. In your house you may not need quiet time. In your house showering every day may be much more important than brushing teeth. The point is that it is up to you to decide what you can let go of and what you cannot. The point is to get to a place where you are not exhausting yourself trying to follow some rigid idea of parenting that doesn’t really exist anyway.

Letting go of parental performance can be difficult. Letting go of the normal way of doing things can also be pretty difficult but we are not in a “normal” time right now. Give yourself permission to let go of some things during this time. Your sanity and your children will thank you for it.

