



Milestones Learning Center Family Minutes

A resource from our family to yours

May 2024

Mental Health Awareness - Stress, The Parent Edition



The stress at times can be overwhelming as a parent. There are literally sleepless nights as you worry about your child's health, physical growth, social development, and academic gains. In addition to the responsibilities of maintaining a home, meeting the expectations of a job, and supporting a relationship with your spouse.

In this month's *Family Minutes* we will discuss how to create balance as a parent. How to learn to slow down time and to create time for yourself to benefit you and those you care about.

Take A Deep Breath

Stopping to pause in your day for a few minutes will not make you

late, will not create chaos in your world. It will give you a better perspective and make you more efficient and healthier. Take your lunch hour! Never work through lunch. This is a time to nourish your body and your mind. Try to do some form of exercise. This does not mean joining a gym! That could cause more stress. Simply add 10-15 minutes of exercise, whether it is walking the children up and down your street, doing wall Pilates with an app on your phone, setting an alarm to remind you to stand and stretch every hour while at your work desk, or jumping in the pool in the early evening after dinner.

Talk It Out

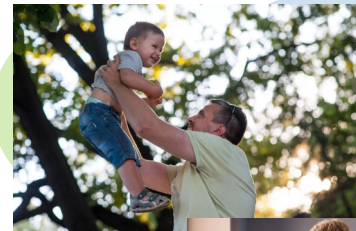
Talking about the events that have or are taking place; whether it is a child who refused eat, a child who says "no" to all questions, a spouse who appears to not understand the importance of consistency in parenting, or a boss who wants your first priority to be the job and not your family. Having a person to talk to about your thoughts and emotions with no fear of judgment is an

important tool for parents to have in their kit. This can be a family member, a friend, a religious leader, or a professional counselor.

Knowing When To Say No

There is a misconception that telling a child "No" is a not an option. Children need to have limits and need to learn disappointment in the safety of their family. Telling them that we are not going to the park today, that they cannot have another 5 minutes to play, that it is time to leave, or that they cannot wear their swimsuit to the mall are all teachable moments.

Continued





Yes, there could be tears in the moment but by saying “no” *and sticking to it*, you are showing your child your limits and reducing future emotional battles of will.

This too applies to work and friends. Being able to say no is essential to create a strong work/life balance. Designate family only nights or a spouse only night. Place a limit to the number of events you attend in a week or month and commit to not working extended hours on a regular basis.

Questions to ask oneself

Setting parameters on when and why you do things can help you be more effective. Knowing what you want to prioritize and ensuring that your actions support that goal.

- Is this an emergency?
- Who benefits the most right now if I say yes?
- Is there someone else who can help me do this?

- What would happen if I put this off one more day?
- Will my absence have a negative impact on me or others?
- Why do I feel the need to say yes?

Stop and Stay Cool

Stress spreads from person to person and the impact of stress is real. Although there is no way to eliminate all stress in your life or that of your child's life, it is important to recognize that stress can have a huge impact on how your child behaves.

In [a recent study](#), researchers investigated the connection between parenting stress and child behavior. Studying more than 200 children ages 3 to 9 and at different stages of development, their results supported the fact that parental stress can, in fact, lead to behavioral problems in children.

The Guilt

All parents at some point experience the guilt of having to attend a work meeting, missing a dance recital, or being too tired and short when responding to a child's request. It is important to feel guilty. This is our body's way of telling us we are not in balance. This guilt can eat away at a parent rather than help them to learn how to focus more on being present in the moment when they are able. Putting down the cell phone at the

baseball game. Sitting on the floor with your child when you are tired but need to talk to them to show them you are coming to them. Use the feeling of guilt to change the way you approach interactions with your child to make those moments more memorable.

FAMILY READ

My Mom Has Feeling Too
by K.D. Stoddard

This book is a wonderful way to help children understand that parents get tired too. It's a view of motherhood made real through gentle poetry and an adorable mother-child duo. Together, they experience the emotional strides of a mom being an everyday human from tears and smiles, to shouts and hugs. *My Mom Has Feelings Too* speaks to the soul of motherhood.

<https://www.amazon.com/My-Mom-Has-Feelings-Too/dp/B0CS65G7LL>



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