

# 8 NOT-SO-GREAT PARENTING HABITS

WITH SIMPLE FIXES FOR BIG CHANGES

**LIFE WITH CHILDREN IS  
MEANT TO BE ENJOYED**

---

Easy ways to change Not-So-Great Parenting Habits and greatly improve your family's dynamics. Be a happier parent and live a balanced life.

**PRINT ME NOW**

[www.thepragmaticparent.com](http://www.thepragmaticparent.com)

# SIMPLE FIXES FOR BIG CHANGES

## BEING BUSY LEAVES NO TIME FOR IMAGINATIONS TO TAKE FLIGHT

Being so busy that there is no white space left on your calendar is not a good feeling – especially for children. You can run your social calendar – but it should not run you.

Nowadays, there is a sense of filling all the empty space with activities, sports, errands, playdates, birthday parties and outings because we have good intentions that we're socializing or providing learning opportunities for our children. Activities are fine sometimes but not so frequently that you're eating meals in the car, and running your kids from school to one activity after another until bedtime.

Childhood needs scheduled time for boredom and growing imaginations through creative-play and without adult agendas.

Let your children play at home and outdoors. Boredom is what leads to exploration, creativity and building an imagination. Let them be bored – schedule the time for it if you must – to dig in the dirt, pick up bugs, play dress-up, splash in the water and build forts.

Childhood is fleeting – this is something adults know all too well – juggling overscheduled activities and eating meals during carpool doesn't leave much time for these critical development experiences.

### *Related Reading:*

- [How to Create a Positive Home](#)
- [9 Traditions Every Family Needs For Connection](#)
- [8 Ways to Connect With Your Kids Individually Every Day](#)
- [10 Screen-Free Alternatives to Wind Down Before Bed](#)
- [How to Teach Your Kids to Play By Themselves](#)

## PREPARATION... WHAT IS THAT?

Are you taking the time to prepare the night before for school lunches, a trip or outing or are you scrambling in the morning to get your bags packed, food, snacks, water bottles, diaper bag and all the necessities you'll need? Save yourself the frantic scurrying around to gather everything - and hope you didn't forget anything - as you're running out the door. Take 10 minutes to pack your supplies the night before.

### *Related Reading:*

- [How Your Family Can Benefit From a Daily Routine](#)
- [How Much Sleep Do My Kids Really Need? Comprehensive Sleep Charts Baby – Adolescents](#)
- [Makeover Your Mornings: From Chaos to Calm](#)

# SIMPLE FIXES FOR BIG CHANGES

## OFFERING TOO MANY CHOICES

When you give your children choices, they feel empowered by having a voice and being a part of the decision making. But when you begin to offer more than two choices, this is where the decision-making becomes harder, and takes longer.

Offering three or four choices for lunch will become a conundrum for little kids (and parents), but if you give them two options, they can compare the two and make a quick choice.

The more choices you offer during the day whether it's for picking out an outfit, meals, activities, or for a distraction or resolution to behavior, gives children the power they need to feel confident and the sense of power they feel even from the most simple of choices, will help detour temper tantrums.

### *Sample Ideas of Choices:*

- Would you like grilled cheese or a quesadilla for lunch?
- Do you want to wear a blue shirt or green shirt today?
- We can play with playdough or color right now, what would you like to do?
- We have five minutes before bedtime, do you want to read a book or play with your legos?

### *Related Reading:*

- [Why You Need to Stop Saying "Good Job" and What Your Kids Need You to Say Instead](#)
- [Why is My Child Lying? Understanding the 8 Reasons Children Lie](#)
- [Put an End to Power Struggles](#)

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MAKING REQUESTS & STATEMENTS

You will not get what you want unless you ask for it. Directly and clearly asking for what you want and need.

This isn't just true for parenthood – it's true in life. In your job, with friends and as a parent when you make a direct statement instead of a request, you're likely to get the desired action.

Asking your child, "Max, can you please pick up your toys when you're done playing," doesn't work as well. "Please pick up your toys now so we can have lunch."

When you stop asking for your child to please do something in a couple minutes or at the time of their choosing (which often time is never), when you state what you need them to do at that moment, there is a much greater chance of it getting done.

### *Related Reading:*

- [9 Proven Ways to Boost a Child's Confidence](#)
- [The Best Approach To Calming a Tantrum \(That Actually Works\)](#)
- [Why Are You Yelling At Your Kids? Understanding What Triggers Your Mom Anger](#)

# SIMPLE FIXES FOR BIG CHANGES

## YOU PUT YOURSELF LAST ALL THE TIME

Parents spend so much time and energy meeting the needs of their children. After the kids are in bed, the dishes are done and laundry has been folded, there isn't much time to do anything other than fall onto your bed exhausted.

Being depleted doesn't allow you to care for your children – or play with them – how you want when your energy comes in the form of 2 cups of coffee or a 3 o'clock sugar fix.

Finding time to replenish yourself and feed your own soul with something you love is important. Schedule time before your kids wake up, after they go to bed, hiring a babysitter or swapping child care duties with a friend one day a week to get some alone time to do something that is important to you.

Sometimes single parenting, finances and juggling time between work, children and your home is hard. Simple pleasures like reading a book, taking a bath, sitting quietly with a cup of something warm, exercising or a glass of wine is simple and easy enough to give you the comfort you need to reenergize yourself.

### *Related Reading:*

- [7 Ways to Dig Yourself Out of a Mom Funk](#)
- [10 Ways to Rock Being a Stay at Home Mom](#)
- [The One Thing You Need as an Introverted Mom](#)

## YOU AREN'T LISTENING TO YOUR KIDS

How often do we **really** stop and listen to what our kids are saying?

This may sound harsh, but how many times do we mumble a half-hearted “uh huh” or nod our heads when our kids try to tell us a new story or show a picture they just drew? The reality is that when you don't fully listen, give some sort of cursory response or offer an obligatory “good job,” your tone and body language don't go unnoticed by your children.

They children come to you and want to share because you are the most important person in their lives and what you think, say and offer is valuable and meaningful to them.

Stop what you're doing in that moment and show them that you are listening. Really, truly listening.

### *Related Reading:*

- [The One Parenting Tip That Will Change How You Parent Forever](#)
- [How to Help Develop Emotional Intelligence in Children](#)
- [Spotting Overwhelming Environments When Kids Need a Parent to Intervene](#)

# SIMPLE FIXES FOR BIG CHANGES

## YOU SAY YES TOO OFTEN

How often do you find yourself in a position agreeing to take on a new responsibility - whether it's joining (another) committee, attending another event you don't want to go to, or doing something you absolutely have no interest or desire to do but feel obligated to still say yes to anyways.

All those extra times you say yes, even when your plate is already full pile up and weigh you down emotionally, mentally and even physically. If you want to have a less busy life, you have to start saying No.

Your first response to everything should be no. Sit on it and honestly evaluate if you realistically have the time, energy and interest to take on another responsibility. Remember, for every yes you agree to do, something else in your life will have to be made less of a priority. Do you have space for one more thing?

**If it's not a hell yes, it's a hell no!**

*Related Reading:*

- [25 Things That Are Stealing The Joy Out of Your Motherhood](#)
- [The Best Sanity Saving Tips for Stay at Home Moms](#)
- [Stop Trying to Make Everything Perfect](#)

## ...AND YOU SAY NO TO YOUR KIDS MORE

There is a rule in child psychology that for every "No" you say to your children, you need to counter balance with five – yes FIVE – "Yes" responses.

Stop pushing the brakes on your children, and instead of giving negative responses, try to be more flexible and less controlling by saying yes more often. The 1:5 ratio will make your children happier, relieve some parenting stress and dissolve the tension that can build up until tantrums and back-talk. Save the big No response for the big stuff – when it's important and kids are asking for something that is unsafe.

This doesn't mean you're spending money or heading out the door to traverse the city this weekend, it simply means giving in and saying yes to five more minutes of reading books, one less bite of spinach, or cuddling with them at bedtime.

If you daughter wants to wear a cat sweater and candy-cane striped pants with flip-flops to school, let her. Your son wants to help make dinner, no problem. Your kids want to do a puzzle instead a take a bath before bed, let's do it!

*Related Reading:*

- [The Magic That Happens When You Say Yes To Your Kids More Often](#)
- [How Will My Children Remember Me When They Are Grow](#)
- [15 Healthy Habits Every Parent Needs to Teach Their Children](#)
- [25 Ways to Be a More Playful Parent](#)