

Making my own positive parenting checklist

As I was reading [this positive parenting checklist](#), which offers a list of 17 things parents can do to be better parents, my mind started spinning.

Yes, there are so many things I can do better as a parent—and there are some great ideas on this list. I could listen better, teach more, reprimand less, and we could certainly read more together.

But at this moment, when I can't remember the last time our children attended school three days in a row, and when we are so out of routine that no one is even sure whether we are eating lunch or dinner, I'm afraid a list of 17 tips attached to my fridge wouldn't serve me well. It has been winter for a year or maybe two. It's cold and wet and icy. Our children have built fort after fort and spent way too much time with screens.



Even in good weather, the truth is that what works for my family may not be what works for yours. But if I were to summarize what I try to keep in mind in my parenting, this is what I would offer:

- 1. Hold them close.** Even with boys who are 5 and 7, we let them sit in our laps or next to us on the couch. Sometimes I even carry them. I know, I know. They're big, but they're not that big. And we waited a long time to have them in our arms.
- 2. Say yes more than no.** Will the world really end if they eat chips in the living room? Why can't we break the rules in Monopoly? The morning of your Chinese New Year party, why wouldn't it be more important to make a cardboard dragon instead of cooking the food?
- 3. Avoid being a referee.** I try to let our children sort out their own problems. It doesn't always work, but it works more often than it doesn't.

4. Play. I can't do this all the time. But if I do this even for 10 minutes in the evening after dinner, it makes a world of difference in the day.



5. Listen. They can't always articulate what is bothering them, but these conversations are important. And even though I can barely keep up with the Skylanders or the Octonauts or how to pronounce characters' names in the *Star Wars Lego Encyclopedia*, I need to be interested. That is what matters to them right now.

6. Find time to spend with your child one-on-one. John and I see what a difference it makes in how we connect with our children if they get personal time with each of us. It doesn't need to be hours or a trip to the movie theater. It can be a grocery store trip with one of them or a book with the other. It makes them feel special.

7. Laugh with your children. If you can find humor in a situation, you can cope with so much more in life. I hope we are able to hand that on to our children.

8. Pray. Relax. Let God work through you. Know you'll make mistakes and wake up tomorrow and try to do a little better.



I have a long way to go and so many ways I need to grow as a mother. And these snow days, as we are all house-bound and stir-crazy, can be a true test for me.

So, I'd love to hear from you. What are your positive parenting tips?