

# Speeding through life

It was a long summer evening, and I had a few errands to run. Both our boys wanted to come along with me, and I always enjoy having company.

As we were walking between stores, the boys saw a long open stretch of sidewalk ahead of us, and they took off running.

“Wait for me!” I called after them, not really expecting them to listen. “Wait! Wait! Wait!”

But of course they kept running, shoes slapping the sidewalk, hair flapping in the wind, laughter fading as they sped away. They were safe, so I wasn’t concerned.

Then I saw a man coming toward us, walking right down the center of the sidewalk. Our boys were going to race right past him. I watched as they separated and ran around him.

For a moment, I was worried. Not every grown-up remembers being a child. Not every grown-up understands that sometimes children are full of energy and excitement and joy. Not every grown-up appreciates a mother who lets her children run on ahead of her on a beautiful summer evening, giving them a small taste of freedom in a world where children are so closely supervised.

I keep thinking back to the last day of school. I had just picked up the boys from a half-day, and we were having lunch in a very casual restaurant. The boys were laughing and playing together and one of them got out of his seat. A man sitting near us turned and reprimanded our children for not behaving appropriately. They weren’t at their best, and I apologized. We could have been better behaved. But later I found myself feeling sorry for someone who doesn’t remember being a child full of that last-day-of-school feeling. I hope I never forget what that’s like.

So, as I hurried along after our running children, I tried to prepare myself to receive a critique of my parenting from this man who was approaching.

But as he and I met, I realized he was smiling.

"I don't think they're going to wait for you," he said.

We both laughed.

When I caught up with our boys, I thought of what he had said. These children don't wait for me. They never do. They just keep growing up and away. Who knows whether they ever hear my voice following them as they go. But even though they aren't waiting for me, I trust I will always find joy in watching them grow, even as they race through every day.