

## **Don't Forget About YOU: The Importance of Parent Self-Care**

Being a parent or caregiver is incredibly rewarding, but it can also feel overwhelming at times. We all want to show up as our best selves for our kids, and when life gets busy, it becomes harder to stay patient and present. As we head into a new year, we want to gently remind you that taking time for yourself is not selfish; it's essential. Even small moments to reset and recharge can make a meaningful difference. To help spark ideas, we've put together a list of simple self-care tips for parents and caregivers.



### **Leave your house**

Leaving the house can feel like a lot of work with packing snacks, coats, diapers, and more, but it's worth it. A quick trip to the store or a coffee shop can give you a much-needed change of scenery.

### **Go for a walk**

Fresh air and nature work wonders. Walking boosts your mood, energizes your body, and clears your mind. Even if it's chilly, bundle up and go for a short stroll. You're sure to feel a difference!

### **Enjoy down-time**

When you get a break, try not to fill it with chores or work. Instead, use some of those moments to rest or do something that relaxes you, such as reading, watching a show, or enjoying a favorite hobby. When you find quiet moments in the morning before everyone wakes up or in the evening after bedtime, use them for reflection, gratitude, planning your day, or simply taking a breath and easing into (or out of) your day.

### **Make time for relationships**

Schedule date nights with your partner and time with friends. Spending time with the people you love helps you feel connected and supported. Even a short getaway can lift your spirits and strengthen the relationships that matter most.

### **Pamper yourself**

What are some little things that bring you joy? A coffee shop beverage? Getting your nails done? Watching the game on TV? While these things may seem minor, they can really boost your mood!

### **Prioritize sleep**

Sleep deprivation can affect mood and safety. Make sleep a priority so your body has time to rest and recover. If possible, share nighttime duties with another caregiver so both of you get rest. When your child is sleeping, it's okay for you to rest, too! While it may be tempting to stay

up late watching TV or scrolling social media, you'll likely feel the effects the next day. Our bodies need sleep for overall health, so honor that need whenever you can.

### **Find a preschool you can trust**

When you know your child is in good hands, you can enjoy the day knowing your child is safe and loved. This allows you time to focus on work, the house, and you! While your child is at school, use that time in ways that benefit you.

### **Trust your gut**

It's common for other people to offer advice on how they think you should raise your child, whether it's about sleep routines, food choices, or screen time. Often, these suggestions come from good intentions and a desire to be helpful. Remember that what works well for one family may not be the right fit for yours. Do your research, trust your instincts, and make decisions that fit your family's needs.

### **Notice and enjoy the moments**

Your children are only little once. If you find yourself in a challenging time, try to reframe it. Acknowledge their age and how their actions fit the stage they're in. Learn to appreciate what each age offers... the cuddles of a baby, the wonder of a toddler, the determination of a 2-year-old, and the silly antics of preschoolers. Each of these fleeting stages has its own magic.

Make this year count. Know that taking care of yourself is just as important as taking care of your children. Small moments of rest, fun, and connection can help prevent parent burnout and keep you energized for the rewarding, messy, and wonderful work of parenting. You deserve it!