



Wee Learn



Wee Experts (5 - 6 years): How COVID-19 is Grounding Helicopter Parents & Why That's a Good Thing

Over the last several months, as working parents have had to take on roles usually performed by teachers, coaches, and school nurses all while working full-time, we have become overextended and overwhelmed. Even those of us who never considered ourselves helicopter have found ourselves hovering over every aspect of our children's lives.

During this pandemic, our parenting culture has been evolving, and we might take this opportunity to change the flight plan on our helicopter habits.

When our children are around us 24/7, it can feel impossible to manage every moment of their lives. This is a good thing! Once our children are safe and well cared for, we need to be able to get our own work done and enjoy some alone time.

Here are few tips to help you achieve the balance you have been seeking through out this pandemic:

Let it go. Allow your kids to learn to self-monitor by letting go of strict rules around screen use, bedtime, eating and diet. In the case of screen time, ask your child how much screen time per day they think is appropriate and how they plan to monitor it. Whatever their response is, say: "Let's give it a try and see how it goes." This new navigation is a process. You'll have to back off of peppering them with "How long have you been on your tablet?" and "Only one more hour!" types of questions and comments. It is going to take some time, but once they learn to keep themselves in check without you constantly on top of them, they'll be able to apply that valuable skill to a host of other situations, making life a whole lot more manageable for you and them.

Give kids more responsibility.

Sometimes it can feel easier to just do things yourself, but we are not doing kids any favors by denying them the opportunity to take on responsibilities. Giving your kids a "longer leash" allows them to feel less controlled, more capable, and more respected. What does that look like?

If you are like most moms, you hear "Mom, can you make me a snack?". Children are perfectly capable of managing when, how much and what they eat. Older kids can learn to prepare their own meals, but even young children can open the fridge and grab a snack. The key is to leave them some options (little baggies or containers work great for this). That way, they still have some choice and control over what and when they eat.

Have family meetings.

Especially as you make changes, it is important to talk with your children about them. Discuss with them what more lenient rules might look like (e.g., Mom won't enforce a bedtime, but kids will be responsible for setting an alarm and being ready for school on time). Establish expectations and boundaries together to create buy-in. It is important that all family members feel included in the process.

Source: <https://bit.ly/3e2uY83>

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Stop second-guessing every parenting move. If you have ever laid awake at night convincing yourself you're a terrible parent, you're not alone. At one time or another, most of us have been harder on ourselves than is warranted. It is OK to make mistakes. In fact, it is important for your children to see the adults around them acknowledge their errors and see how they go about correcting them. By remaining fluid with rules, you know that if you are veering off course, you can quickly re-right yourself.

When you second-guess every parenting decision you make, you're robbing yourself of the joy of parenting.

Backing off from helicopter parenting helps kids to develop important skills like self-reliance and problem-solving. And, as the parent, you will get to watch from a distance and take pride in their growth and accomplishments. Maybe a new flight plan will help you in grounding the helicopter altogether.

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