

Parent Guide



@twinklparents

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What is this resource and how do I use it?

Pressure on parents to always be the best version of themselves is becoming more and more intense. From the perfect picture being painted on social media platforms, comments on what your child eats, to how much screen time is acceptable, there is always something to feel guilty about. This top tips guide will help you let go of parental guilt.

What is the focus of this resource?

Positive Mindset

Developing Self-Confidence

Celebrating Success

Self-Care

Further Ideas and Suggestions

For more information and ideas on how to deal with other aspects of parenting, visit our [Parent Guidance and Support page](#) to find out more.

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Staying Positive and Managing Parental Guilt

What Is Parental Guilt?

- We all experience guilt from time to time.
- We look at everything we've done and focus on the things we could have done better.
- When it comes to our children, they are the most precious possessions that we own so it's not surprising that we are always thinking about the impact of everything we do on them.
- It is easy to brush aside all of the positive things we have done for our children and fixate on things that haven't gone so well, this is when we start to feel guilty.
- There are lots of times you may experience parental guilt. It could begin as soon as you bring your baby home from the hospital and worry that you won't be a good enough parent or it could be linked to specific situations or challenges you might face.
- Remember that parental guilt is very common and it can often make you feel anxious and unhappy.

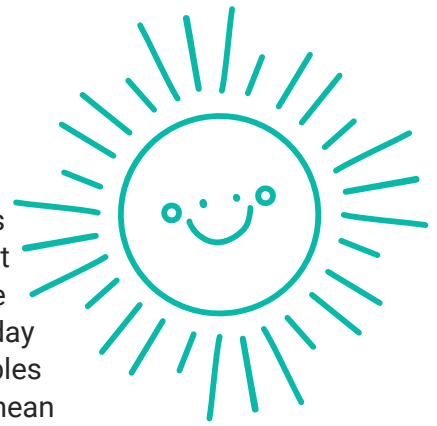
Keep reading to find out some top tips on how to let go of the guilt that is weighing you down and remind yourself of what a **wonderful job you are doing**.



Top Tips for Dealing with Parental Guilt

Today is today:

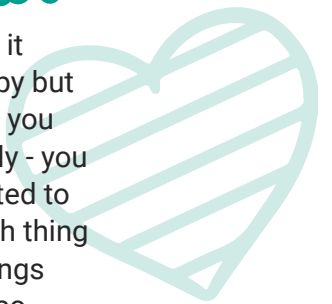
Parenting is a real life rollercoaster, full of ups and downs. Some days you can get to bedtime and feel like nothing has gone right. You might focus on a stressful dinner time or the fact that too much screen time was given. However, try not to fixate on a particular moment of your day that is fueling the guilt. Remember that if your child didn't eat vegetables today or had more screen time than you would have liked, it doesn't mean that you have caused any long term effect on your child. Look at the bigger picture, for example, "They didn't eat any vegetables today but we can try again tomorrow." This is today and tomorrow could be completely different. Let it go and move on!



Move away from the idea of the 'Perfect Parent':



Wanting to do the best for our children is never a bad thing. However, when it starts to consume you, it can be debilitating. You want your child to be happy but feeling under pressure to do everything 'just right' can result in you feeling guilty. Day to day life isn't always going to run smoothly - you might run out of time to go to the park or you are too exhausted to read the third bedtime story. Try to accept that there's no such thing as a perfect parent, which will help you to manage those feelings of guilt. Every child is different and you know what they need, so don't focus on what is the right way or wrong way and do what feels natural for your child and family.



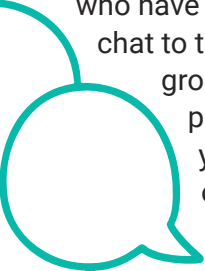
Avoid 'Information Overload':

A helping hand when it comes to raising your child can be a wonderful thing and so many people are grateful to have family and friends close as a network of support. However, taking on too much information can be overwhelming and make you doubt yourself or feel guilty that you might be doing something wrong. When you are receiving conflicting advice from people around you, it can dampen your self-belief in your qualities and instincts that you naturally have to be a great parent. Remember to try and balance the information from the outside world, stay true to yourself and, if you choose to parent slightly differently to a family member or friend, that is OK too!



Top Tips for Dealing with Parental Guilt

Get chatting:



Becoming a parent can be isolating, especially if you don't have many friends who have their own children. Get out and speak to other parents - you can chat to them whilst visiting the park, go along to a toddler 'stay and play' group or start a new hobby where you will most likely meet other parents. It is a great feeling to have someone to talk to and share your experiences with in a non-judgemental way. By talking to other parents you will soon find out that you are not the only one who is experiencing parental guilt. You get to hear from other parents, support each other and reassure one another that we are all trying to do our best - it won't be perfect everyday.


Make time for number one:

When you are a busy parent, finding time for yourself can be tricky to fit into the schedule and often you can feel guilty when doing so. You need to remember that, to be able to look after others, you need to make time to look after yourself. Having a child free cup of coffee, a chat with a friend or even a date night with your partner can do you the world of good. It allows you to remember that as well as being a parent you are an individual with your own needs. By having this 'me time' you will feel refreshed and ready to deal with challenges when they arise. Try to schedule a small bit of 'me time' each week. Remember you are important too!



Parent vs parent:

Parenting isn't about competing with other parents! In this modern world we have an open window using social media platforms into many people's lives, some of which we won't personally know. Social media can be amazing and has lots of good advice and tips but it is easy to look at someone's social media posts and compare your life to a beautifully captured picture of their life.



Remember most people post about the good times but you can be sure that they are also experiencing the rollercoaster of the ups and downs of family life. What they choose to share won't be a true reflection of everyday experiences.

Top Tips for Dealing with Parental Guilt

Take note of the little wins:

When you've had a challenging day and you feel everything has gone wrong, it can be very easy to feel guilty and focus on the negatives. However, even on a day like this there will be some things that went well - think of these as the 'little wins'. A great way to perk up your spirits on a challenging day is to write them down. It may be something as little as seeing your child giggle, watching a film together or even getting out of the house on time. You can involve your child as well by asking them to tell you one thing that has made them smile today - bedtime is a perfect time to reflect on their day and end on a positive note.

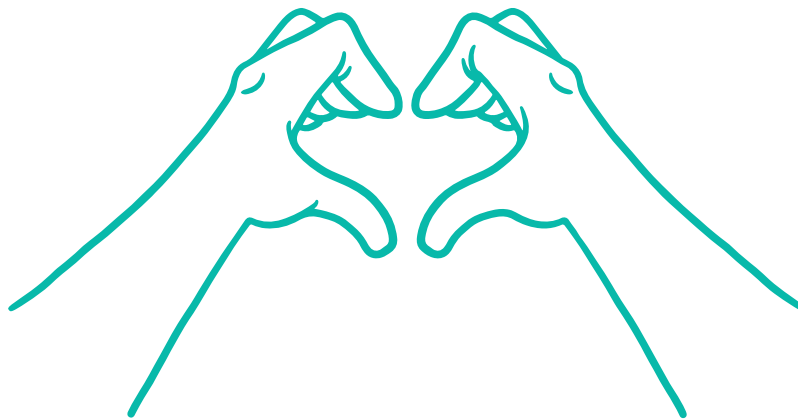


Love, laughter and memories:

Birthdays and celebrations can be a time where parental guilt comes out to play. Many parents worry about not giving their children enough or buying the right toy. Remember that in years to come your child will look back at photographs of special occasions and talk about their happy memories of time spent with family and friends - they probably won't even remember the exact toy that they received. A great way of creating a realistic birthday list with your child is to ask them to think about the following points:

- Something I really want is
- Something I really need is
- A book I would love to read is
- A place I would like to visit is

This way you hopefully won't end up with an endless list of toys that they will be expecting to unwrap on their birthday.



Disclaimer: We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. This resource is provided for informational and educational purposes only. It is intended to offer general information and should never be taken as professional advice on mental health. As information on mental health is complex and is a developing area, we do not warrant that the information provided is correct. You should not rely on the material included within this resource and we do not accept any responsibility if you or your children do. It is up to you to contact a suitably qualified health professional if you are concerned about your mental health or the mental health of your children.

Today is Today



Move Away from the Idea of the 'Perfect Parent'



Avoid 'Information Overload'



Get Chatting!



Staying Positive and Managing Parental Guilt

Now you have read all the top tips, here is a handy poster you can print out and keep in your house. When you are feeling parental guilt, take a quick look at your poster to remind you of all the top tips you have learnt and that you are doing a wonderful job, even on the trickier days!

Make Time For Number One



Parent vs Parent



Take Note of the Little Wins



Love, laughter and memories

