

7 Things I've Learned from 7 Years of Parenting

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Today is my seventh wedding anniversary, and as many of you already know, my anniversary also happens to mark another milestone for me — my start as a mother.

I celebrated my fifth month of pregnancy shortly before I walked down the aisle, and I've been learning, laughing, and, of course, crying ever since that day that my husband and I vowed to take on life, marriage, and parenting together.

So with the new year ahead and seven years and four kids behind, I'm reflecting back on the most important lessons I've learned since that first slightly nauseous day.



This one comes courtesy of my husband, who confesses that when he first became a father, he felt like he had to be a “super strict” dad to be a good dad. But now that we have four kids, he's learned that all that really matters is to love them and to “let them be who they're going to be.”

I couldn't have said it better myself.

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Image via Chaunie Brusie

It's always so tempting for us as parents to simply want to lay down the letter of the law and have it be obeyed. But oftentimes, when our children aren't listening to us, it's more helpful to take the 10 seconds to truly hear them and allow them to voice their feelings than to yell for complete obedience. Sometimes, we need to take the time to listen to their little voices, too.



And honestly, it's OK, because all of your children are different, and you will be a different parent to each of them.

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#4

Fun is
always
more
important.

Image via Chaunie Brusie

I'll never forget the first day I came home from dropping my oldest daughter off at kindergarten. I suddenly realized how silly I was to have spent five years worrying about what she needed to be learning or making sure she reached all of her educational milestones.

I realized that none of that mattered. I should have enjoyed just saying "yes" with her while I was lucky enough to have her home all day. Why didn't we just have more **fun**?

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#5

Kids always
act better
when you
expect the
worst.

Image via Chaunie Brusie

I was just discussing this particular parenting adage with a fellow parent of four the other day, and he totally agreed with me. In Murphy's Law of Parenting, kids will always act the best when you expect them to act horrible and always act the worst when you need them to be on their best behavior. Might as well accept it now.

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#6

No one
really
knows what
they're
doing.

Image via Chaunie Brusie

I mean, really. What other job has absolutely no real prep and has completely on-the-job training? And just when you think you've got it all figured out, your kid will be growing up and moving into the next stage of life, leaving you to start all over again.

Sigh.

#7

They're
always
watching.

Image via Chaunie Brusie

No matter what your child's age — from birth to baby and beyond — I can pretty much guarantee that nothing you say or preach to your child will be as important as what you do.

Like tiny stalkers, your kids will be constantly watching you, even when you least expect it, and you will have more influence on them than you realize. It's not a responsibility to take lightly, but hey, smile! You're on candid parenting camera!

What's the most important parenting lesson you've learned so far?

Author



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Chaunie Brusie is a coffee mug addict, a labor and delivery nurse turned freelance writer, and a young(ish) mom of four. She is the author of "Tiny Blue Lines: Preparing For Your Baby, Moving Forward In Faith, & Reclaiming Your Life In An Unplanned Pregnancy" and "The Moments That Made You A Mother". She also runs Passion Meets Practicality, a community of tips + inspiration for work-at-home mothers. ... [More](#)