

Pandemic Parenting Burnout: Rest for the Weary What Burnout Looks Like and What Can Help

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Signs of parental burnout may include, but aren't limited to, the following symptoms:

Extreme fatigue	Forgetfulness	Tearfulness	Irritability
Escape fantasies	Resentment	Feeling "too busy" for self-care	Hopelessness

Tips for Combating Pandemic Parenting Burnout

Original Source: <https://www.care.com/c/pandemic-parental-burnout-signs-and-advice/>

**Italicized additions made by Christ Church Wellness Team*

1. Recalibrate Standards

"Think about your list of negotiables and non-negotiables," Ruthie Arbit, a psychotherapist who specializes in maternal and pediatric mental health says. "Maybe you're eating more cereal for dinner, exercising less and only reading People magazine. That's OK! Our pre-pandemic expectations of ourselves and our families should not be the same expectations we have now."

Recalibrate your standards, and allow yourself to continue to adjust them. Fluidity and flexibility are important when it comes to resiliency during demanding times.

2. Have self-compassion

This is a critical but elusive strategy," Arbit notes. "The self-compassion voice should be saying: 'Yes, this absolutely sucks. This is not OK, and we can say it's not OK.' It's so important to be gentle and understanding with ourselves right now. We were not meant to live like this. Giving yourself permission and space for these feelings can help with burnout."

Related to this is the importance of giving yourself grace. Parenting is a blessing and it's also a grind. You are doing the best you can in each given moment. Some days/some hours will be better than others and that's not only ok, but makes complete sense. Be kind to yourself in this role.

3. Try to stop doing everything

This is an actionable step in tandem with recalibrating standards. "Doing everything" is admirable but overly ambitious and not sustainable. Where possible engage others in tasks- one's partner, a babysitter or family member. Also, one's kids. The clothes may not be folded perfectly BUT even a child or teen folding them can get them off the couch. (both the clothes AND the child or teen. ☺)

4. Embrace the silly

Laughter and play reduce stress and increase endorphins — so more of that, please. "Being silly provides our bodies and minds with a release," explains early childhood educator and content architect for KinderCare Education, Rashelle Chase. "It's also a great way to connect with our kids."

Goof around, tell jokes, make Tik-Tok videos — these things will both enhance the parent-child bond and help kids feel connected, safe and less stressed themselves.”

5. Stop multitasking

Research has shown that doing too many things at once — i.e., making dinner while looking through school papers while mentally planning playdates — contributes to less production, not more. Also, as many parents will attest to, it makes you feel a little twitchy.

6. Get out

Get out of your house — daily, if possible. “I take a walk every day — I have to,” says Andrea Simmons, a mom of three in Winfield, Illinois. “Ideally, I meet a friend and we walk for a half hour, but when that doesn’t happen, I’ll just take a few laps around the block to remove myself from the craziness at home. When I come back, I always have a much calmer attitude and outlook.” *If there’s no time or possibility of physical exercise, at the least consider a way to get outside to change your vantage point, perhaps even stretch your body. Fresh air and sunshine are always a good thing.*

7. Wake up first

“I’m really not a morning person, but the past few months I’ve tried to make it a point to be the first one up in the house,” says Meaghan G., a mom of two in New York City. “It’s the only time of the day where the house is totally quiet and peaceful, so it helps set the tone for the day.” *This ritual can initially seem unobtainable (who doesn’t want more sleep?) but a few days in and it will prove itself to not only be very valuable but also will be eagerly anticipated when you lay your head down the night before.*

8. Practice gratitude

Looking for the bright spots and expressing gratitude is good for not just your mental health, but also your physical health and relationships. Whether it’s writing in a journal or sharing three good things that happened in your day at the dinner table, taking the time to feel and express gratitude can help a lot.

*(*This being said, journaling about the things that are driving you insane can also be a very helpful practice. 😊)*

9. Self-care

The definition of “self-care” is different for everyone but of no debate is the fact that it’s important for everyone. One person’s pedicure may be another person’s lying on their bed with their pet by their side. What’s important about self-care is that it is time that’s purpose is all about the rest and replenishment of you.

10. Find support – personal and, if needed, professional

While self-care is important, it’s still something you have to do for yourself. And in times like these, having one more thing to do feels like the straw that may break the camel’s back. Having others to vent to/with is of critical importance. Have “team members” who are your “go to’s” for support and sharing. These would be people who bring you relief as well as rejuvenation. Friends, especially those who are also experiencing similar parenting challenges are incredibly valuable. Seeking tips and support from parent friends with children older than yours can be tremendously helpful. Also, consider the value of a seeking support from an objective third party like a mental health professional, a minister or a parenting coach.

If you are interested in learning more about counseling support available through Christ Church’s Wellness Ministries services and/or if you would like support in finding a counselor in Charlotte, please feel free to contact Christ Church counselors, Mollee Reitz (Reitzm@chirstchurchcharlotte.org) or Alex Bacon (Bacona@christchurchcharlotte.org) as they would be happy to help you.