

The Funny Business of Parenting

Pam J Hecht, Special to WNC Parent Published 1:10 p.m. ET May 13, 2020 | Updated 2:06 p.m. ET May 13, 2020

To survive pandemic parenting, find some peace and quiet (and chocolate)

In these trying times, it is uplifting to hear that chocolate may prevent COVID-19, or any virus for that matter. This is an important breakthrough for those of us who regularly recover from the rigors of parenting by binge-watching TV shows with a secret stash of candy bars.



Kids play with scattered toys (Photo: Getty Images/, iStockphoto)

But while I'd like to say that this information comes from a reputable website, I fear that I possibly may have dreamed it.

What's worse is that a government drone caught me throwing a kid out a window after being stuck in extreme togetherness for almost exactly what felt like two decades.

I know this because I received a phone call from The Authorities that went as follows:

Authorities: We saw you throw your kid out the window.

Me: It was because of COVID-19.

Authorities: Were you a decent parent before all of the virus shenanigans began?

Me: I was OK.

Authorities: How often during this pandemic have you felt compelled to throw a child out a window?

Me: Hold on – let me get my calculator... approximately six hundred and two.

Authorities: That sounds reasonable.

Me (looking down): Wait. I forgot to count April.

Parenting is hard enough without extreme togetherness and a virus to worry about. The need to vent is understandable. Unfortunately, a call to my mother does not help matters:

(Ring, ring.)

Me: Hi, Mom.

Mom: Coronavirus.

Me: How are you doing today?

Mom: Coronavirus.

Me: Seen any good movies this week?

Mom: Coronavirus.

Turn on the computer. Coronavirus. Talk to a neighbor. Coronavirus. Text a friend. Coronavirus. With all this focus on this coronavirus, a parent can forget to enforce hygiene in the house, leading to a smell in the hallway that can make an unsuspecting person gag. Then, the place you normally escape to for high-quality alone time now has its own issue: there are only two rolls of toilet paper left.

Once pried out of the bathroom (because now the people you are trying to avoid need you for absolutely no reason at all), the next best activity, after sobbing, failing to get work done and feeding another bottomless young pit, is online necessity hunting. Unfortunately, the latest rhinestone-studded masks will likely be out of stock, which is a shame because they are intimidating while at the same time, highly fashionable.

An upside to family life during a pandemic, is that allowing more screen time is now Good Parenting. So is teaching important survival skills, like how to look cool on camera and what to use instead of toilet paper. Lesson number two: shake tree leaves before using to avoid critters biting sensitive places while you do your business.



A mother colors a doll house with her young kids (Photo: Getty Images)

Outdoor fun is more necessary than ever, as long as kids don't talk to anyone, play with anyone, stand near anyone or breathe too much. Eating unidentified mushrooms, playing in traffic and climbing onto roofs are now relatively safe, as long as everyone wears masks and gloves.

It's clear that adapting to change is an important life lesson learned during the current pandemic. For example, perhaps you, too, have seen the Broadway-quality production, "The Good, The Bad & What Happens When Hair Appointments are Postponed and Children Fail to Recognize the Newer, Gray-er Parent."

Just remember, if the kids still know what a toothbrush is for, things aren't so bad. Also, if anyone asks for help with schoolwork, it can easily be avoided with an ominous, "I'm under the weather...maybe it's The Virus."

What's most important right now is to lower your expectations and keep a sense of humor, if possible, so that the young folks stay calm and pleasant and you don't feel the need to hurl them out a window.

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