

# Daring Book For Dads

A simple guide to raising kids..... A dad's view

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## Wife is pregnant

Congratulations!!! Your hard work paid off. Your wife is pregnant, and you are ready to have your first child.

Having your first child is an incredible experience. Get ready for an incredible experience – one that will forever alter your world.

Till you have your first child, you are the most important person for yourself. Of course you love your wife, your parents, your siblings, your family and friends. But let's be honest. You love yourself more than anybody else.

That is about to change. As soon as you have your first child. There is an incredible change. You are not the most important person for yourself anymore. Your child is. Some other person's life becomes more important than your own life in an instant.

Your priorities change overnight.



## Preparing for the Arrival: Navigating the Final Stages of Pregnancy

As your due date approaches, the frequency of doctor's visits will increase. Expect a shift from monthly checkups to weekly, and possibly even multiple visits per week as your wife nears delivery. This increased frequency provides crucial monitoring for both mother and baby.

**Embrace the Power of Information:** Don't hesitate to ask your doctor questions. The more informed you are, the better prepared you'll be. Talking to friends, family, and colleagues about their experiences can offer valuable insights. Supplement this with online research but always verify information with your doctor.



**Understanding Birth Scenarios:** There are three primary ways your child may arrive:

- **Normal Labor:** This involves waiting for labor to begin naturally. Your doctor will provide a timeframe, and you'll head to the hospital where your wife experiences labor symptoms.
- **Induced Labor:** This is a planned procedure where labor is medically initiated in the hospital. Pre-arrangements for hospital rooms and medical staff are essential.
- **C-Section:** A Cesarean section is a surgical procedure used when vaginal delivery isn't feasible due to complications such as a large baby, breech position, or umbilical cord issues. While often planned, C-sections can also be necessary in emergencies.

**Planning for Every Possibility:** While hoping for a natural birth, it's wise to have a backup plan. Consider scheduling an induction date for one to one-and-a-half weeks after your due date. This ensures resources are readily available if labor doesn't start naturally. Going significantly past your due date increases the risk of complications, such as a baby becoming too large for vaginal delivery or low amniotic fluid levels.

**Your Role as a Partner:** As the father, your role is crucial. Ensure your wife's and your baby's needs are met. Prepare the nursery, install the car seat, and practice using the pram. Familiarity with these items will ease the transition after birth.

**Capture the Moment:** In the United States, you're usually permitted to be present during the delivery and record the event. Consider filming this momentous occasion, it will be a cherished gift for your child, and, well, it might even come in handy someday! if your child wants to run for President of United States, he/she will have proof where he/she was born.

## Get Term Life Insurance

Before your little one arrives, get 30-year term life insurance for you and your spouse on top of employer provided life insurance for protection of your young family.

### **Avoid Whole Life Insurance:**

Whole life insurance will be just another financial burden.

## Congratulations, you are a new Father!

Holding your child for the first time is an unparalleled miracle of nature, a piece of your DNA brought to life.

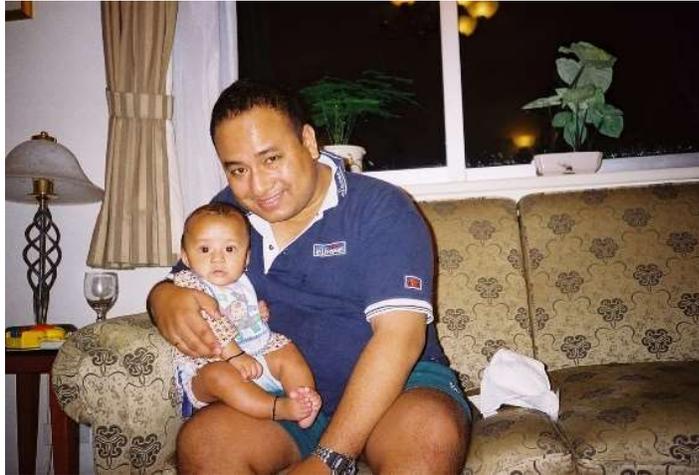
This journey will be transformative, requiring you to adjust your priorities and routines. This guide will help you navigate the exciting, yet challenging, first few months.



## Start of the Joyful Journey: First Few Months

### The First Days and Weeks:

Your life will revolve around your child's needs. Hospital stays vary, but once home, prioritize safety. Master the use of car seats, prams, and other baby equipment. In the initial weeks, your role is primarily



supportive. Your wife will be the primary caregiver, providing nourishment and care. Your job is to support her and ensure she has everything she needs.

### Key Responsibilities:

- **Support your wife:** This is crucial. She's undergoing significant physical and emotional changes.
- **Track appointments:** Keep a detailed record of vaccinations and doctor visits.
- **Seek support:** Don't hesitate to ask for help from family, friends, or experienced parents. New parents often feel overwhelmed, and support is invaluable.
- **Ensure healthy eating:** Your wife's nutrition is vital for her recovery and milk production. Encourage healthy eating habits.
- **Establish a routine:** Consistency is key. A regular sleep-wake-feed schedule will benefit both your baby and your family. This means adjusting your own schedule to align with the baby's needs. Say goodbye to late nights for a while!
- **Ask questions:** Don't be afraid to ask your doctor, nurse, or other healthcare professionals any questions you may have. Utilize your insurance company's nurse line. When in doubt, on the side of caution and seek medical attention. Even if there is the slightest chance that your child is sick, take him/her to the doctor. Always safe than sorry.



The first couple of months just spend time watching him/her grow. Stimulate him/her with various sounds. One day you might catch his/her first smile.

### Beyond the Basics:

The first two months are primarily focused on feeding, sleeping, and ensuring your baby's well-being. Focus on establishing a healthy routine and seeking help when needed. Remember, this is a journey, and

it's okay to ask for help and support along the way. Enjoy this incredible time and cherish every moment.

## Navigating the Thriving Toddler Years (0-3)

The first three years of your child's life are a whirlwind of incredible milestones and heartwarming moments. Prepare to witness a breathtaking transformation—from tentative rolls to confident strides, from gurgles to first words. This period is less about structured learning and more about fostering a safe and stimulating environment for exploration.



**Embrace the Exploration:** These are your child's "exploration years," a time of intense physical and cognitive development. While often referred to as the "terrible twos," with the right approach, this phase can be truly wonderful. Expect a rapid progression of physical skills: rolling, crawling, standing, walking, climbing, jumping—and yes, falling! These are all normal parts of growth.

Embrace the tumbles and celebrate the triumphs.

**Safety First:** Your primary focus during these years should be ensuring your child's safety. Childproof your home, supervise closely, and anticipate their boundless curiosity.

**The "Everything-in-the-Mouth" Stage:** Biting and licking are completely normal behaviors in toddlers. They explore the world through their senses, and their mouths are a primary tool for this exploration. If your child *isn't* exhibiting this behavior, it might be cause for a check-up with your pediatrician. Similarly, their climbing instincts are a sign of developing physical abilities and coordination. Provide safe spaces for climbing and exploration, while ensuring their safety.

**Celebrate the Journey:** The first three years are a journey of discovery, both for your child and for you. Embrace the chaos, celebrate the small victories, and cherish the memories. This period lays the foundation for a lifetime of growth and development.

## Finally, Beyond the Terrible Twos

Reaching your child's third birthday marks a significant milestone—a triumphant graduation from the often-challenging "terrible twos." This isn't just about surviving; it's about thriving in a new phase of connection and understanding. The transition to age three brings remarkable changes in your child's cognitive and emotional development. Suddenly, the tools for effective communication, negotiation, and motivation become available. You'll find yourself engaging in conversations, setting boundaries, and collaborating in ways that were previously impossible.

Remember the seemingly endless days of chasing your toddler? The frustration of a child who couldn't understand the rules or the limitations of their environment. Those days are behind you. This isn't to say that challenges will disappear entirely, but the nature of those challenges will shift. For example, recall the stress of navigating an airport or airplane with a two-year-old? The experience is dramatically

different with a three-year-old who understands the context of the situation and can respond to explanations and instructions. This newfound understanding opens doors to smoother travel, more enjoyable outings, and a deeper, more rewarding parent-child relationship. Embrace this incredible leap forward and enjoy the journey of raising a more communicative, cooperative, and aware child.

## Nurturing Healthy Eating Habits

The first few years of your child's life are crucial in shaping their relationship with food. The eating habits established during this period often stay with them their whole life. Embrace this opportunity to cultivate a lifelong love of healthy eating.

**Exploration and Education:** Between the ages of one and two, your child will naturally explore their taste buds, experimenting with everything within reach. This is a perfect time to introduce a wide variety of nutritious foods.



**Building a Foundation:** Offer a diverse range of healthy options, including:

- Whole grains (brown rice, whole wheat bread)
- Fruits and vegetables (a colorful array!)
- Lean proteins (meat, chicken, fish, eggs, lentils)

**Mindful Choices:** In Nepalese culture, most of the moms try to feed their children white rice all the time. Try to avoid over-reliance on refined carbohydrates like white rice. A balanced diet is key to your child's healthy development. This is an

excellent time to establish healthy eating patterns that will benefit them for years to come. Remember, you are not just feeding your child; you are shaping their future relationship with food.

### Simple strategy:

After age three, forget separate meals! The sooner your little one joins you at the family table, the sooner you can ditch the tiny-portion chef act. The secret? Variety! If you're eating healthy, chances are your child will follow suit. You eat well; they eat well. You do not need to cook separately. It's a win-win.



## **Water is the champion**

- **Water:** The ultimate beverage champion. Think of it as the superhero of hydration. A sippy cup is your trusty sidekick in this battle. Small sips throughout the day is the key.
- **Milk:** The protein packed, calcium-rich, vitamin dense powerhouse. Aim for a cup with each meal. In Nepal we never drink cold milk. We always drink hot or warm. But, in western countries most people drink milk cold as it is pasteurized and safe.
- **Sugary Drinks:** The villains of the hydration world. Occasional treats only! Think of them as the occasional reserved for big celebrations. Juices are as bad as Sodas. If you must drink Juice – make it yourself by blending the whole fruit and drink it with pulp.

## **Chocolate and Candy: The Occasional Treat:**

Let's be honest, what is growing without some sweet candies and chocolates? So, do not deprive your child of those treats. But remember those are treats – not everyday staple.

And for goodness' sake, no bedtime sugar bombs! You don't want a hyperactive kid bouncing off the walls at 2 AM.

## **Sticking to a Routine:**

Stop chasing your child around with a bowl of white rice and a spoon in hand 24x7. Seriously. Let them get a little hungry. It's not child abuse; it's called building healthy eating habits.

If you don't give him/her time to be hungry. He/she will not enjoy the food. Many mothers worry that their child will have malnutrition if they do not feed them 24/7. There is 0.00001% chance that your child will have malnutrition. So, do not worry about it.

Establish a regular breakfast, lunch, and dinner routine. Family meals are a great way to bond (and subtly influence their food choices). Highchairs and bibs are your allies in this messy endeavor. Embrace the spills and the chaos. It's all part of the fun.

## **Healthy Snacks: The Secret Weapon:**

Between Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner. Give some healthy snacks every couple of hours. It is very easy to give them Chips, Chocolates, Cookies, etc. They are convenient. But, they are bad. Instead, give healthy finger food like carrots, boiled eggs, cheese, whole grain chips, grapes, peeled oranges. Healthy finger foods are great. Make them available in intervals at the same place e.g. on the kitchen table so that the child can eat by himself/herself. Do not make your whole house a dining room. Do not make food available all the time all the places.

## **Bedtime stories**

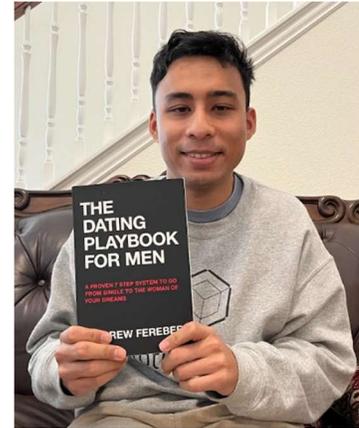
Most of American parents read bedtime stories to their children.

It helps kids love reading. They learn that reading is fun, not just homework. It starts a habit of reading that can last a lifetime.

Reading comprehension is the most important skill for academic success as all the standard testing like SAT, ACT, GMAT, CAT etc. depends on the reading comprehension. Even for math questions presented in world form.

I wish I had read to my kids more. My wife and I didn't read much, and our kids didn't either. Later, my kids told me they wished I had read them bedtime stories. It was a missed chance.

Don't make the same mistake. Read bedtime stories to your children. It's the easiest way to help them love reading and do well in school.



## "Rules are Rules" and Consistency is the King

After you've survived the terrible twos, start setting the boundaries and rules and stick to them.

### **Consistency is the King:**

The biggest parenting mistake? Inconsistent rule enforcement. Imagine this: "No eating in bed!" is the rule. But sometimes, when you're feeling great you allow to eat in the bed and other times, when you are not in good mood you get angry for doing the same.

Child gets confused and stop following the rules.

### **Why rules in School Works (and Home Doesn't):**

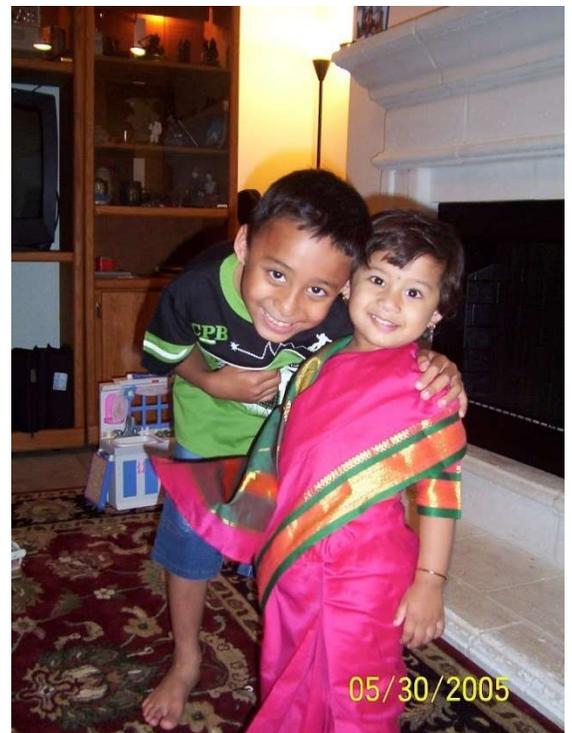
Kids follow the rules in the school. That's because the rules are consistent. Teachers don't change the rules based on their mood. They apply them fairly and firmly. This predictability creates a sense of order and security for the child. Bring that same consistency home!

### **The "Mood-Swing" Myth:**

Let's ditch the idea that parenting should be a rollercoaster of emotions reflected in inconsistent discipline. It's exhausting for you *and* your child. Instead, aim for calm, clear, and consistent rule enforcement. This doesn't mean you have to be a robot; it means establishing clear boundaries and sticking to them, regardless of your mood.

### **Action Plan:**

1. **Establish Clear Rules:** Keep them simple, age-appropriate, and few.
2. **Communicate Clearly:** Explain the rules to your child in a way they understand.



3. **Consistency:** This is the hardest part, but the most crucial. Stick to the rules, even when you're tired or stressed.
4. **Positive Reinforcement:** Reward good behavior! Positive reinforcement is far more effective than constant punishment.
5. **Be Patient:** Changing behavior takes time. Don't get discouraged if you don't see results overnight.

By establishing and consistently enforcing clear rules, you'll create a more predictable, secure, and ultimately, happier home environment for everyone. Remember, you're not just teaching rules; you're teaching self-discipline and respect – valuable life lessons that will serve your child for long time.

## Teach your culture

Giving your children their culture and heritage is super important. It helps them know who they are and where they come from. It gives them a strong sense of self.

### Celebrate Everything!

The best way to teach culture is to do it. Celebrate every festival and ritual! Think Dashain, Tihar, Rakhee, Bhai Tika – all of them. These celebrations are like fun lessons about your family's history and values.



### It's Hard, But Worth It

Sometimes, festivals are on weekdays, and it's tough to celebrate fully. You might need to change plans or work extra hard. But trust us, it's worth all the effort.

### The Big Payoff

When your kids grow up, they will know their heritage inside and out. They'll have a strong identity and be proud of their heritage. Your effort now builds their future.

## Kidding around: Building Bonds Through Childhood Games

One of life's simplest joys is the uninhibited fun of playing with young children. Those early years, before the age of four, are a golden opportunity to foster connection and physical activity through shared play. It doesn't matter if it's soccer, baseball, tag, or simply throwing a ball back and forth – the key is *engagement*. Get down on the ground, kick the ball around, play catch, and let their imaginations run wild. Don't worry about structured games or perfect technique; focus on the joy of shared movement

and laughter. This isn't just about physical health; it's a powerful tool for building strong relationships.



The time you invest in playful interaction creates lasting bonds and strengthens your connection with your child. And, as a bonus, you'll get a workout yourself!

As your children grow (four years and older), organized sports can become a valuable addition to their lives. However, this doesn't signal the end of spontaneous play. Continue to find opportunities to connect through games and activities. The benefits of shared playtime extend far beyond the physical; it fosters emotional growth, strengthens family bonds, and creates cherished memories that

will last a lifetime. Remember, the most important element isn't the *what*, but the *who* and the *how*.

## Routines: They work

Our universe operates on predictable cycles – day and night, seasons turning – our bodies and minds thrive on rhythm and regularity. This is especially true for our kids.

The sooner you establish healthy routines for your child, the smoother your family life will become. Think consistent sleep schedules, regular mealtimes, and a predictable structure to their day.

But here's a crucial point: you can't expect your child to embrace routines if you don't model them yourself. Before you start setting those bedtime rules, take a look at your own habits. Are you getting enough sleep? Are you hydrating properly? Are you prioritizing regular exercise? Your child is watching, learning, and mirroring your behavior. Lead by example!

To get started, focus on these three fundamental healthy routines:

1. **Prioritize Sleep (8+ hours):** Adequate sleep is the cornerstone of physical and mental well-being. Aim for 8 or more hours of quality sleep each night. This will make a world of difference in your energy levels and overall mood.
2. **Hydrate (8 glasses of water):** Staying properly hydrated is crucial for countless bodily functions. Make sure you're drinking enough water throughout the day. Keep a water bottle handy as a visual reminder.



3. **Move Your Body (30+ minutes of exercise):** Regular physical activity boosts energy, improves mood, and contributes to overall health. Find an activity you enjoy and make it a non-negotiable part of your day.

By establishing these routines for yourself, you'll not only improve your own well-being but also create a positive and healthy example for your child to follow. Remember, routines aren't about rigidity; they're about creating a supportive framework for growth and happiness.

## Teach Them to Swim: A Lifesaving Skill

Water safety and the ability to swim are crucial life skills. Teaching your child to swim as early as possible, ideally before age 3, is a vital step in ensuring their safety. This doesn't mean training them for competitive swimming; the goal is independent swimming ability.

### What is "Independent Swimming"?

For our purposes, independent swimming means your child can:

- Swim three lengths (75 meters) of a 25-meter pool unassisted. Float on the water for 90 seconds. This is a common benchmark, like what some scouting organizations require.

### Why Teach Them Young?

Many homes and community facilities have swimming pools. As your child gets older (3-4 years old), they'll likely encounter pool parties and other water-based activities. A child who can swim is a safer child. Knowing your child can handle themselves in the water significantly reduces parental worry.

### How to Teach Your Child:

There are two primary ways to teach your child to swim:

1. **DIY (Do It Yourself):** Many parents successfully teach their children to swim at home. Numerous online resources and books offer guidance. Remember to prioritize safety and always supervise your child closely.
2. **Swim Classes:** Enrolling your child in professional swim classes provides structured lessons and expert instruction. This is a great option for parents who lack experience or confidence in teaching swimming themselves.

### What if You Can't Swim?

If you don't know how to swim, it's time to learn! Many community centers and colleges offer affordable adult swimming lessons. You can become a confident swimmer in just a few weeks. Learning to swim is an investment in your own safety and your child's.



Teaching your child to swim is a gift that can save their life. It's an investment in their safety and well-being. Take the time to learn or teach this vital life skill. The peace of mind it provides is invaluable.

## Early Age Recreational Sports: A Parent's Guide

### Why Enroll Your Child in Youth Sports?

Enrolling your child in youth sports offers a multitude of benefits that extend far beyond the playing field. It's an investment in their physical, mental, and social well-being, shaping them into well-rounded individuals.

### The Foundation of a Lifetime of Fitness:

Early exposure to physical activity establishes healthy habits that often last a lifetime. Regular participation in sports promotes cardiovascular health, strengthens muscles and bones, and helps maintain a healthy weight, reducing the risk of chronic diseases later in life.

### Cultivating Discipline and Respect for Rules:

Sports inherently involve rules and regulations. Children learn to follow instructions from coaches and officials, fostering discipline and respect for authority. This translates to improved behavior in other aspects of their lives, both at school and at home. The concept of fair play and adhering to rules becomes ingrained, promoting ethical conduct.

### Building Essential Teamwork Skills:

Teamwork is a crucial life skill, applicable to both personal and professional endeavors. The vast majority of adult work involves collaboration. Youth sports provide a fantastic environment to develop these skills. Even individual sports often incorporate team elements (e.g., relay races in swimming or track and field). Children learn to cooperate, communicate effectively, and support their teammates, fostering a sense of camaraderie and shared responsibility.



### The Power of Play (Ages 3-4)

At ages 3-4, the focus is not what they play, but on making sure that they play something. Get your child moving! Any sport is a great starting point – it's all about discovering their interests and having fun. This is a journey of exploration for both you and your child.

### Finding the Right Fit:

Check your local community resources:

- **Churches:** Often offer youth programs.
- **YMCA:** Known for their family-friendly activities.

- **City Parks and Recreation Departments:** Usually have affordable programs for young children.

Popular introductory sports for this age group include toddler soccer and T-ball.

**Affordability and Commitment:**

Recreational sports are surprisingly budget friendly. Run by volunteers and utilizing local facilities, costs are typically minimal – around 70\$ to 80\$ for a three-month season. Don't worry about perfect attendance; missing practice or game won't be a problem.

**Beyond the Game:**

Recreational sports offer invaluable social benefits. Children learn:

- Interaction with peers and coaches.
- Following rules and instructions.
- Teamwork and cooperation.

Team parties, post-game treats, and award ceremonies create positive memories for both kids and parents.

**Building on the Foundation (Ages 4-5 and beyond)**

As your child grows, you can explore more structured sports.



**Great Starting Points:**

- **Soccer and Basketball:** Excellent for developing teamwork, coordination, and cardiovascular fitness.
- **Volleyball:** May be better suited for older children (4th-5th grade) due to the upper body strength required.
- **Football:** Similar to volleyball, it's often better to wait until 4th-5th grade. Many children transition from soccer to football later on, as many skills overlap.
- **Martial Arts (Karate, Taekwondo):** Great for

physical activity, discipline, and self-confidence. Remember, becoming a martial arts expert takes time and dedication.

Remember, the goal is to foster a love of physical activity and healthy habits. Let your child lead the way and enjoy the journey together!

## College Savings: Planning for Your Child's Future

Planning for your child's college education is a significant financial undertaking. The earlier you start, the better. Let's explore the key questions surrounding college savings:

### When Should I Start Saving?

The ideal time to begin saving for college is *as soon as possible*. Even small, consistent contributions can accumulate significantly over time due to the power of compounding interest.

### Should I Contribute to a 529 Plan?

Yes, if you can. 529 plans offer significant tax advantages, making them an attractive option for college savings. However, they should be considered within the context of your overall financial plan.

### How Much Should I Save?

Determining the appropriate savings amount depends on several factors, including the cost of your desired college, the length of time until your child attends college, and your family's financial situation. There's no one-size-fits-all answer. However, regularly contributing what you can afford is crucial.

### Prioritizing Your Finances:

Saving for college is important, but it shouldn't come at the expense of other crucial financial goals. Prioritize your savings in this order:

1. **Maximize Retirement Savings:** Contribute the maximum amount to your employer-sponsored 401(k) plan, taking advantage of any employer matching contributions.
2. **Maximize Roth IRA Contributions:** If eligible, maximize your annual contributions to a Roth IRA.
3. **Pay Off High-Interest Debt:** Aggressively pay down high-interest debt, such as credit cards and student loans, before allocating funds to college savings.
4. **Mortgage vs. College Fund:** Once you've addressed the above priorities, you can then decide how to allocate the remaining funds between paying down your mortgage and contributing to your child's college fund. Consider the interest rates on your mortgage and the potential returns on your college savings plan when making this decision.

Remember, savings for college should be integrated into your comprehensive financial plan. Consult with a financial advisor to create a personalized strategy that aligns with your goals and circumstances.

## Middle School Fun

Middle School (Grades 6, 7, 8) are truly golden years in kid's school years. They go from being child to young adults.

There are a lot of differences from Elementary School to the Middle school. Class choices, Choice of extracurricular activities like sports, band, Choir, Orchestra.

Lot of physical changes also happen during middle school years.

In Middle School kids can have fun without worrying about class rank, GPA etc.

There are a lot of choices kids can make in middle school. There are elective subjects like foreign languages.

Each course is offered in three different levels. Normal, Pre-AP and GT. For taking GT courses your child must be in GT program. But anyone can take Pre-AP courses. Encourage your kid to take Pre-AP courses that will prepare them better for High School.

## Middle School Sports

The middle school years (grades 6-8) are a crucial period of physical and mental growth, marking the transition from childhood to young adulthood. Keeping your child engaged and busy during this time is vital. Middle school sports offer a fantastic opportunity to achieve this, providing not only physical exercise but also invaluable social and teamwork experience.

### Why Middle School Sports Matter:

Middle school is the perfect time for kids to play for fun and enjoy the camaraderie of a team before the increased crazy competitiveness of high school sports. Participation in sports, combined with other activities like choir, band, or extracurriculars, instills crucial time management skills. A busy schedule keeps kids engaged and less likely to turn to less productive activities like excessive social media or video games.

### Navigating Middle School Sports:

- **Grade 6:** Focuses primarily on Physical Education (PE).
- **Grades 7 & 8:** Most middle schools require at least two years of athletics/PE. Commonly offered sports include football (boys), basketball (boys & girls), volleyball (girls), track (boys & girls), tennis (boys & girls), cross country (boys & girls), and soccer (boys & girls).
- **Team Selection:** Sports like track and cross country typically don't have cuts, making participation accessible to all. Other team sports often involve tryouts. While many schools have multiple teams (A, B, C), prior experience can be advantageous.



### Preparing Your Child for Success:

- **Early Involvement:** If your child is involved in competitive sports outside of school (swimming, softball, baseball, etc.), consider enrolling them in a recreational middle school sport for a few seasons before 7th grade. This helps them develop teamwork skills and increases their chances of making a team, regardless of the team level (A, B, or C). The benefits of team participation extend beyond the level of play.

### The Bottom Line:

Middle school is a time for kids to be kids and have fun. Middle school sports are a significant part of this fun, fostering friendships and valuable life skills. Encourage your child's participation, focusing on enjoyment and teamwork rather than solely on competition.

## Making Good Friends

Starting middle school, it is important to ensure that your kid has right company.

Making friends is a big part of growing up. But it's important to choose your friends wisely. It's not about being popular, cool. It is about finding friends who are kind, trustworthy, and respectful.

If your child has bad friends, they will sooner or later run into trouble.

### Who are "good" friends?

- **They Treat you with respect:** They listen to you, value your opinions, and don't put you down.
- **They are honest and trustworthy:** They tell the truth, keep their promises, and don't gossip or spread rumors.
- **They support you:** They encourage you to be yourself and help you when you're struggling.
- **They Share your interests:** You have fun together and enjoy spending time with each other.
- **They are kind and compassionate:** They treat others with respect and show empathy.

### Who is "bad" company?

- **They use drugs or alcohol:** This can lead to dangerous situations and harmful consequences.
- **They Lie or cheat:** Dishonesty erodes trust and can hurt others.
- **They gossip or talk behind people's backs:** This shows a lack of respect and can damage relationships.
- **They steal or vandalize:** These actions are illegal and harmful.
- **They are mean or bullying others:** Kindness and respect are essential qualities in a friend.

### What to do if you're unsure:

It's okay to have different friends for different activities. You might have friends for sports, friends for school, and friends for just hanging out. The most important thing is that your child stays away from the bad company.

## Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to understand and manage your own emotions and recognize and influence the emotions of others. Studies show that EQ is often more important than IQ for happiness and success. The good news is that unlike IQ, EQ can be improved with understanding and practice.

### Why is EQ Important for Teens?

Starting Middle School a lot of things come to the kid's life social media, peer-pressures, academic stress, relationships, and more. Without the ability to sort through these feelings, teens can become overwhelmed with anxiety, leading to unhealthy coping mechanisms like excessive social media use, risky friendships, or even substance abuse.

#### **A Helpful Resource:**

For teenagers, the book *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves is an excellent resource. It helps teens understand their own emotions and the emotions of those around them, promoting focus and reducing anxiety. We highly recommend reading this book with teenagers *before* they enter high school.

#### **Working with Younger Children:**

While the concept of EQ might be too complex for younger children, understanding EQ yourself will allow you to better understand and support *their* emotions. Learn to recognize and respond to their feelings appropriately.

Developing emotional intelligence is a valuable life skill. By understanding and practicing EQ, you can help your children navigate the challenges of adolescence and beyond, leading to a happier and more successful life.

## **3 Simple Healthy Habits: A Foundation for a Lifetime of Well-being**

This short guide focuses on three essential habits that can significantly impact your child's health and well-being. These aren't complicated, but they are crucial for building a strong foundation for a healthy life. Consistency is key!

### **Drink 8+ Glasses of Water Daily**

Water is essential for every bodily function. Dehydration can lead to fatigue, headaches, and decreased concentration. Encourage your child to carry a reusable water bottle and sip throughout the day. Make water readily available and fun by adding slices of fruit (like lemon or cucumber) for flavor.

**Why it matters:** Water helps regulate body temperature, transports nutrients, and removes waste. Adequate hydration boosts energy levels and improves cognitive function.

### **Get 8+ Hours of Sleep**

Sleep is when the body repairs and rejuvenates itself. Lack of sleep can impair learning, mood, and immune function. Establish a consistent bedtime routine to promote relaxation and better sleep. This could include a warm bath, reading a book, or quiet time. Ensure a dark, quiet, and cool sleeping environment.

**Why it matters:** Sufficient sleep is crucial for growth, development, and overall well-being. It improves concentration, memory, and emotional regulation.

### **Get 30+ Minutes of Exercise**

Physical activity is vital for physical and mental health. It strengthens bones and muscles, improves cardiovascular health, and boosts mood. Encourage your child to participate in activities they enjoy,

whether it's team sports, dancing, biking, or simply playing outdoors. Find ways to incorporate movement into daily life, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator.

**Why it matters:** Regular exercise reduces the risk of chronic diseases, improves sleep quality, and enhances self-esteem. It also helps manage stress and improve mood.

By focusing on these three simple habits, you can help your child develop healthy lifestyle choices that will benefit them throughout their life. Remember, consistency is key! Start small, make it fun, and celebrate successes along the way.

## Take a break: But Distraction is Not Relaxation

Our brains need breaks. They need *real* relaxation, not just a switch to a different kind of stimulation. Think of your brain like a muscle – if it's constantly working, it gets overworked and tired. This can lead to problems like anxiety, trouble sleeping, and even more serious issues.

This is especially important for kids and teens, whose brains are still developing. Quiet time allows their brains to build new connections and grow strong.

Kids today have a lot on their plates: school, homework, friends, social media... the list goes on. Many mistakes *distraction* for relaxation. Scrolling through social media, watching TV, or playing video games might feel like a break, but these activities keep your brain highly active. They don't allow it to truly rest and recharge.

### What is real relaxation?

Real relaxation means giving your brain a chance to quiet down. This could be:

- **Do-nothing time:** Simply lying down and letting your mind wander for a few minutes.
- **Meditation:** Even 10-15 minutes of daily meditation can make a huge difference.
- **Mindful activities:** Activities like listening to calming music, cooking, cleaning, or doing other household chores can be surprisingly relaxing. The key is to focus on the present moment and the task at hand.

Avoid using distractions as a way to unwind. Instead, encourage your children to find ways to truly relax their minds and allow their brains the rest they need to thrive.

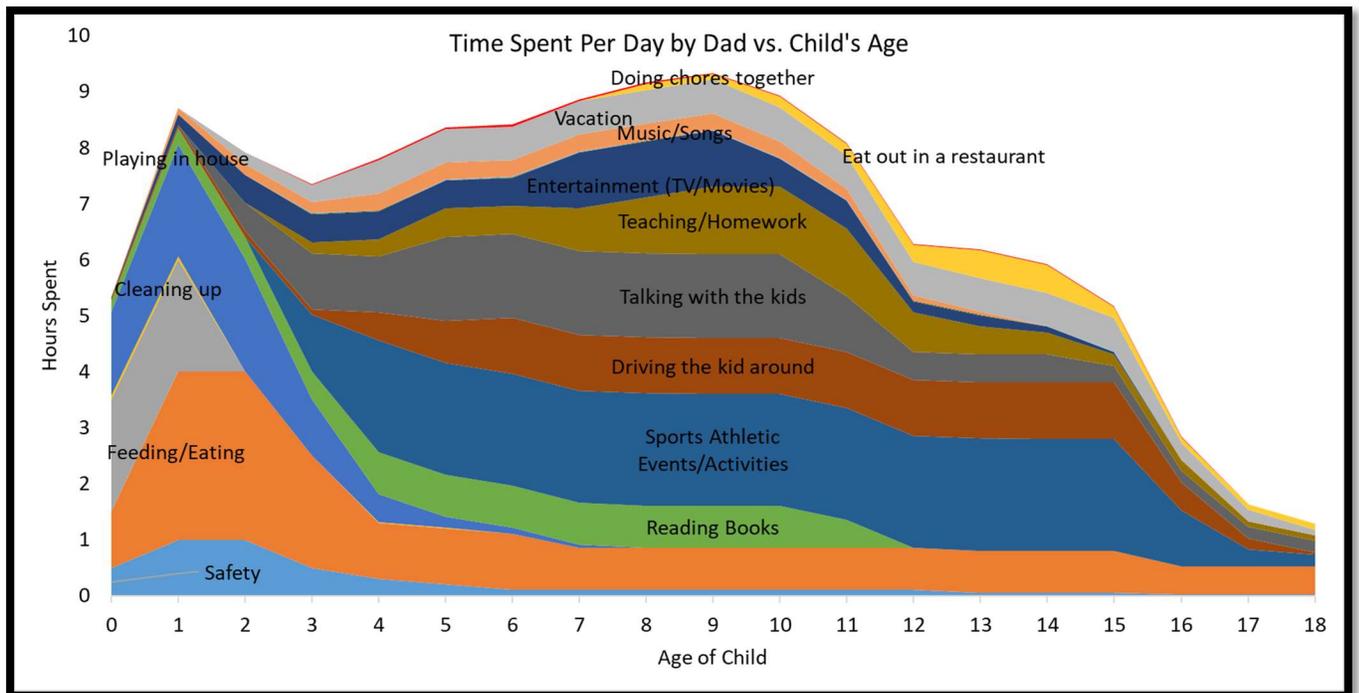
## It's a Limited Time Offer: Cherishing Your Time with Your Children

The most precious gift you can give your child is your time. But this gift comes with a crucial expiration date. Once that time is gone, it's gone forever. There's no return policy, no exchange.

Think of your time with your children as a limited-time offer – a sale that won't be repeated. The window of opportunity for deep, meaningful connection is surprisingly short.

### The Time Window:

While you'll always have a relationship with your children, the quality and quantity of time you can spend actively engaging with them changes dramatically as they grow. The chart below illustrates this:



### The Critical Years:

The most impactful interactions typically occur between ages 4 and 13. This is the prime time to instill values, teach life skills, and build a strong foundation for their future. This is when they are most receptive to learning about morals, culture, social skills, leadership, and religious beliefs (if applicable).

### Don't Miss the Boat:

Many parents find themselves wishing they'd spent more quality time with their children when their kids reach their teens. Suddenly, communication becomes more challenging, and the opportunity for deep connection diminishes. Don't let this happen to you. Be present, be engaged, and make the most of this precious, limited-time offer. The investment you make in your children during these formative years will pay dividends for a lifetime.

## Car Talk

Between the ages of 6 and 15, the average parent spends a significant amount of time driving their children around – 1.5 hours a day.

Those 90 minutes a day (or more!) spent in the car offer a unique opportunity to connect with your children on a deeper level. Turn off the radio, put away your phone, and focus on your kids. This dedicated time, free from distractions, can be incredibly valuable.

Use this time to:

- **Check In:** Ask open-ended questions about their day. Instead of "How was school?", try "What was the best part of your day?" or "What was something challenging you faced today?"

- **Listen Actively:** Truly listen to their responses. Show genuine interest and empathy. This shows them you value their thoughts and feelings.
- **Teach them your values, life lessons:** Car rides provide a relaxed setting to impart life lessons and advice. Share anecdotes from your own life, discuss current events, or offer guidance on navigating social situations.
- **Build Bonds:** Share your own thoughts and feelings, creating a reciprocal conversation. This helps build trust and strengthens your relationship.

## Driver's License: A Key Milestone

Obtaining a driver's license in the USA is a significant step towards independence.

- **Learner's Permit:** Kids can typically apply for a learner's permit once you turn **15.5 years old**. This allows to drive with a licensed adult.
- **Full Driver's License:** Kids are generally eligible for a full driver's license on your **16th birthday**.

### Two Paths to a License

- **Driving School:**
  - Kids attend a certified driving school where professional instructors teach you the rules of the road and practical driving skills.
  - **Important Note:** Even with driving school, parents or guardians will still need to provide additional practice time to ensure proficiency.



- **Parent Taught:**
    - In this method, a qualified parent or guardian takes on the primary role of instructing the new driver.
- I recommend** "Parent Taught" method as it is valuable bonding experience with the kids.

### The Final Driving Test

- Kid can take the test at your local **Department of Public Safety (DPS)** office.
- Alternatively, many **driving schools** are authorized to administer the official driving test, which can sometimes offer a more familiar and less stressful environment.

## High School Experience

High school marks a significant transition from the carefree days of middle school to the threshold of adulthood. These years are challenging, but with the right approach, they can also be incredibly rewarding, shaping your future and preparing you for college and beyond.

### GPA & Class Rank

Grade Point Average (GPA) and Class Rank are crucial for college admissions. Many colleges even offer automatic admission based on achieving a certain Class Rank.

- **Strategic Planning for GPA:** Maintaining a strong GPA isn't always straightforward. Taking Advanced Placement (AP) or Gifted & Talented (GT) classes, even if you earn a 'B', can often result in a higher GPA than getting an 'A' in a regular-level class due to weighted grading. Plan your course load wisely!
- **Standardized Tests:** Standardized tests like the PSAT, SAT, and ACT are important components of your college application.

### Mastering Time Management: The Most Important Skill

High school life is packed! Between demanding coursework, high school sports, outside sports, band, choir, and other extracurriculars, effective time management is the single most important skill you'll develop.

- **Get Organized:** Learn to prioritize tasks, use planners or digital calendars, and allocate specific times for studying, homework, and activities. Helping yourself get organized now will pay dividends throughout high school and beyond.

### Building Your Support System

- **Make Good Friends:** Surround yourself with positive influences. Good friends can provide support, motivation, and shared experiences that make high school more enjoyable.
- **Stay Away from Drugs:** This is a critical piece of advice for your health, safety, and future. Making smart choices now will prevent significant challenges later.
- **Understanding the High School Landscape**

High school in the United States typically spans four years: Class 9 (Freshman), 10 (Sophomore), 11 (Junior), and 12 (Senior).

### Grade 9 – Freshman Year: Laying the Foundation

- **Start Strong:** Freshman year is critical. GPA begins accumulating from day one, and a strong start makes it much easier to maintain a high GPA and class rank throughout high school.
- **Stay Focused:** The workload is significantly higher than in middle school, and there are many new distractions. Stay focused on your studies and adapt to the increased academic rigor.
- **Make good friends.**

### Grade 10 – Sophomore Year: Catch Your Breath and Prepare

- **Maintain Momentum:** While you might feel a slight breather compared to freshman year, it's essential to continue maintaining your GPA.
- **Early Preparation:** This is a good time to start preparing for the PSAT, SAT, and ACT. Familiarize yourself with the test formats and begin building your test-taking skills.

### Grade 11 – Junior Year: The Toughest Stretch

- **Peak Demands:** Junior year is often considered the most challenging. Everything seems to come at the same time: advanced coursework, PSAT testing, getting your driving license, and beginning the college application process. Peer pressure. Boys, Girls.
- **Crucial for College:** Your performance this year, especially your GPA and standardized test scores, will heavily influence your college admissions decisions. Dedicate yourself to your studies and applications.

### Grade 12 – Senior Year: Enjoy and Transition

- **Celebrate Your Achievements:** Senior year is a time to enjoy the culmination of your hard work. Celebrate your friendships, participate in senior activities, and savor your final moments of high school.
- **Prepare for the Future:** While enjoying the fun, also focus on finalizing college plans, scholarships, and preparing for the exciting transition to higher education or your next chapter.

High school is a journey of growth, learning, and self-discovery. By understanding the demands, managing your time effectively, and making wise choices, you can make the most of these formative years and set yourself up for a successful future.

## High School Sports: A Valuable Life Experience

High school sports are a significant part of the overall high school experience, offering opportunities for competition, overcoming challenges, and celebrating success. The teenage years are filled with distractions—peer pressure, social media, and more—and participation in sports can help kids stay focused and grounded.



### Benefits Beyond the Field:

- **College Applications:** A strong record in high school athletics demonstrates well-rounded development, an asset for college applications.
- **Focus and Discipline:** The commitment required for sports can foster discipline and help students prioritize their time effectively.
- **Teamwork and Camaraderie:** High school sports provide opportunities to build lasting friendships and learn the importance of teamwork.

- **Overcoming Adversity:** Sports teach valuable life lessons about perseverance, resilience, and handling setbacks.

**Middle School vs. High School:**

Middle school sports offer a broader range of participation, while high school sports become significantly more competitive. The intensity increases dramatically, with district, regional, and state championships at stake. Coaches at this level often prioritize winning above all else.

**Making the Varsity Team:**

Making the varsity team can be challenging. Prior competitive experience outside of school is often a significant advantage. Many students play junior varsity for several years before dropping out due to the increased pressure.

**College Athletics and Scholarships:**

While many students dream of playing college sports and earning scholarships, this is a rare occurrence. Only a small percentage of high school athletes continue to play at the collegiate level, and an even smaller percentage receive scholarships. Exceptional talent is usually noticed and recruited by college coaches.

**Recommendation:**

We strongly encourage high school students to participate in sports as much as possible, balancing their athletic pursuits with their academic responsibilities. The benefits extend far beyond the playing field, fostering personal growth, friendships, and valuable life skills. Remember, academics should always remain the top priority.

**Binivaa Manandhar**



**Coppel Cowgirls Varsity Soccer  
2020-2021**



**A Guide to PSAT, SAT, and ACT**

Standardized testing is key part of preparing for the college journey. The ultimate goal? Becoming a National Merit Finalist. This prestigious achievement significantly boosts college scholarship opportunities.

**The National Merit Scholarship Quest: PSAT**

Becoming a National Merit Finalist is the easiest way to get a full scholarship in most of the colleges.

Becoming a National Merit Finalist hinges on a single, high-scoring PSAT test taken during junior year. A score in the 99.9th percentile (generally above 1470 out of 1520, though this varies yearly and by state) opens doors to full-ride scholarships at numerous colleges, regardless of GPA, class rank, or extracurriculars.

### **Early Preparation is Key:**

Don't wait until junior year! Encourage your child to take the PSAT in freshman and sophomore years as practice. Aim for 1300+ in freshman year and 1400+ in sophomore year. Identify and address any gaps early. The good news? PSAT preparation significantly benefits SAT and ACT scores.

### **SAT Strategies: Aim High, Take Charge**

Unlike the PSAT, the SAT can be taken multiple times. A score of 1500 (out of 1600) is highly competitive. Start practicing in freshman year, aiming for 1400+ by sophomore year. Regular practice tests are crucial to identify weaknesses and track progress.

### **ACT Advantage: Another Path to Success**

The ACT also allows multiple attempts. A score of 33 (out of 36) is excellent. While different from the SAT/PSAT, preparation for one test often helps with the others.

### **SAT Subject Tests: A Selective Consideration**

Highly selective colleges may require SAT Subject Tests. If your child isn't aiming for these colleges, they can be skipped. If needed, the best time to take them is immediately after completing the corresponding AP exams.

### **Effective Test Preparation: Beyond the Cookie Cutter**

While commercial programs like Kaplan and Karen Dillard offer valuable resources, remember that they are generalized. Actively monitor your child's progress, identify their specific weaknesses, and tailor their study plan accordingly. Regular practice tests are essential for pinpointing areas needing improvement.

### **Submitting Scores: Strategy Matters**

Colleges don't require both SAT and ACT scores. If your child excels in both, submit both. Otherwise, submit only the higher score.

By focusing on consistent preparation and strategic test-taking, you can significantly increase your child's chances of college success. Remember, early preparation and personalized support are key to achieving their academic goals.

## **Choosing the field of study**

Choosing the right college and the field of study is one of the most important decisions of kid's life.

In my opinion choosing the right field of study is more important than choosing the college.

Many kids go after the brand name college, football team and study non-selling field of study like journalism, political science, communication, drama etc. After college, many kids have difficulties finding job and get stuck with minimum wage jobs.

Many parents want their children to become Doctor as Doctors make lot of money. But, you need to understand that becoming Doctor is not easy. First thing is that the kid need to be very good academically as getting into the Medical College and finishing it is not easy. Second thing is that it is a

long journey. So, I advice to choose medical field only if the kid is really interested to go into medical field and very good academically.

My recommendation is that choose the major which is sellable e.g. Medical, Engineering, Accounting, Business. In that way at least the kid's basic future is safe. Beyond that they can study whatever they want and do whatever they want.

## Choosing the Field of Study

Choosing the right field of study is more critical than the college itself.

Many kids chase a college's brand name or sports team and pay lot of money to get a degree in some random majors like Journalism, Political Science, Communication, Astronomy or Drama and end of working in minimum wage job post-graduation.

### **The Reality of the Medical Field**

Many parents want their children to become Doctor as Doctors make lot of money. Becoming a doctor is not easy, requiring exceptional academic ability and a long, demanding journey. I advise kids to pursue medical field only if they have genuine interest and strong academic performance.

### **Secure Future with "Sellable" Majors**

For a stable foundation, consider majors with clear career paths and high demand. These "sellable" fields like Medical, Engineering, Accounting, Business ensure basic financial security, allowing you to pursue other interests later.

## Choosing The College

Selecting the right college involves understanding admissions and financial implications.

### **In-State vs. Out-of-State:**

Out-of-state tuition is 3-4 times higher. Only consider it for significant scholarships or Ivy League schools.

### **Private vs. Public:**

Public colleges are generally more affordable. Unless you receive a substantial scholarship, save money for postgraduate studies by choosing a public option.

The most popular public university in Texas is UT Austin. It is very difficult to get into UT Austin in Computer Science, Engineering, Business. The second most popular is Texas A&M. It is relatively easy to get in in Texas A&M. Next ones are UT Dallas, UNT, Texas Tech, UT Arlington etc.

The most popular private university in Texas is Rice. It is very difficult to get in Rice as well. Other private universities are SMU, Austin College etc.

## Cost of College

Public colleges cost around 25K\$ per year. Private colleges cost around 100K per year.

## College Scholarship

Scholarships can significantly reduce the financial burden of higher education. They generally fall into two main categories: Need-Based and Merit-Based.

### Need-Based Scholarships

- These scholarships are awarded purely based on your family's financial situation and income level.
- If your family's income is low, your primary focus should be on gaining admission to the best college you can. The financial aid office will then assess your need and potentially offer substantial need-based aid, allowing you to attend top institutions that might otherwise seem out of reach.

### 2. Merit-Based Scholarships

- Merit-based scholarships are awarded for academic achievement, leadership skills, talents, or other outstanding qualities, regardless of financial need.
- Many highly popular or "brand name" universities, such as UT Austin, typically do not offer merit-based scholarships. This often holds true even for exceptionally qualified students like National Merit Finalists.
- Many other excellent universities (e.g., UT Dallas, UT Arlington, UNT) frequently offer merit-based scholarships. These are often based on academic performance (GPA) and standardized test scores (SAT/ACT). It's common for these institutions to offer full scholarships to National Merit Finalists, making them very attractive options.
- **Prestigious Awards:** A select few students with exceptional academic records and leadership abilities may qualify for highly competitive and prestigious awards like the McDermott Scholarship, Chancellor's Scholarship, or Presidents Scholarship. These are rare and sought after.
- **Private Scholarships:** Beyond university-specific awards, there are numerous private scholarships available (e.g., Terry Scholarships). Many of these private scholarships also have income requirements, meaning your family's income must be below a certain threshold to be eligible.
- **Private College Scholarships:** If kid has good academic result, most of private college will give scholarships to make it competitive with the public colleges.

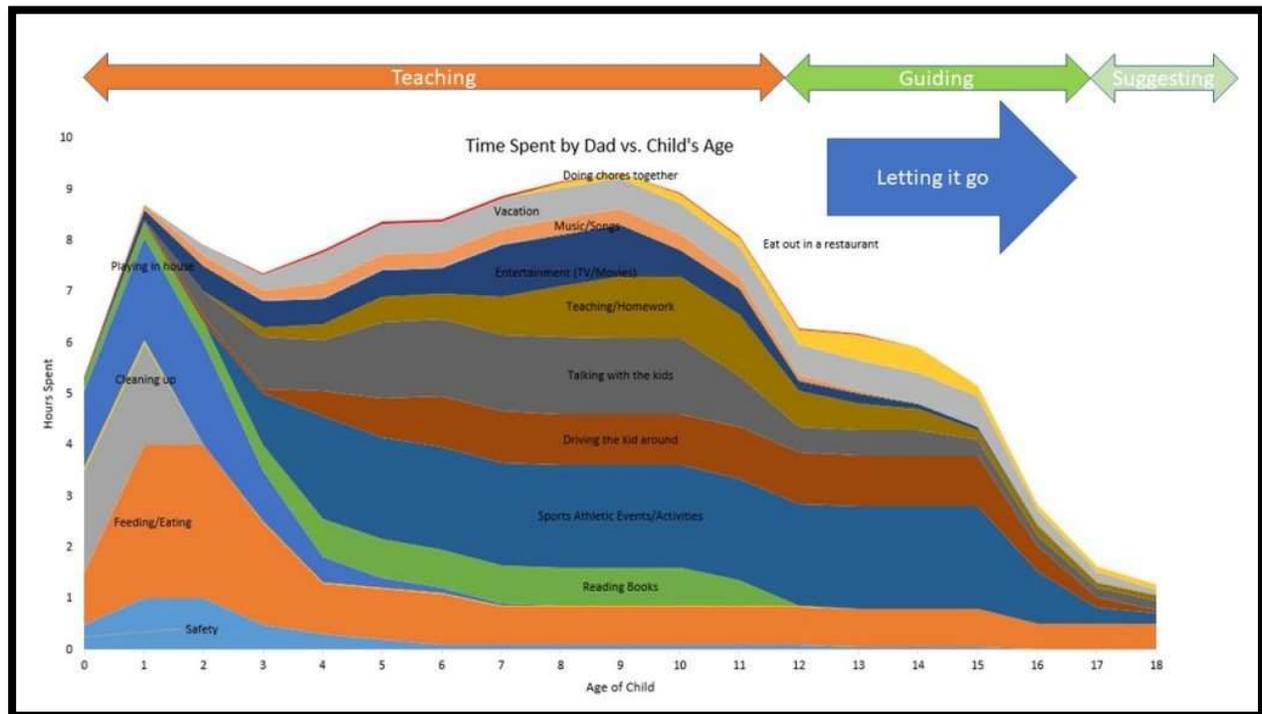


## Letting It Go: You must let them go, if you want to keep them with you.

Parenting is a journey, not a destination. It's a process of nurturing, guiding, and ultimately, letting go. Think of it like teaching a child to ride a bike. You start with training wheels, providing support and

stability. But eventually, you have to let go. You have to trust that they've learned enough to ride on their own. Falling is part of the process; it's how they learn to balance and gain confidence.

Parenting is much the same. We want to protect our children, to shield them from harm and make the best decisions for them. However, clinging too tightly prevents them from developing independence and resilience. If we don't let go, they'll never learn to navigate the world on their own.



### The Crucial Years: Before the Teen Years

The years before your child becomes a teenager are critical. This is the time to instill life skills, habits, values, and beliefs. Whether it's healthy eating habits, cultural traditions, religious practices, or moral principles, impart your wisdom and guidance during these formative years. The more you teach them before they hit their teens, the better equipped they'll be to handle the challenges ahead.

### The Transition: Teen Years and Beyond

Once your child enters their teenage years (13-18), the focus shifts from direct instruction to guidance and support. This is the time to let go, even though it's incredibly difficult. Trust in the foundation you've built. Your role becomes one of offering advice, being a listening ear, and providing a safe space for them to explore their independence. Remember, they will make mistakes, and that's okay. Learning from those mistakes is crucial for their growth.

### Adulting: Embracing Independence

At 18, your child becomes a legal adult. While your love and support remain constant, your influence changes. Your words become suggestions, not commands. They are now responsible for their own

choices and consequences. This doesn't mean abandoning them; it means trusting them to navigate their own path.



Letting go is not easy. It requires trust, patience, and a willingness to accept that your children will forge their own way. But by embracing this process, you empower them to become independent, confident, and capable adults. Remember, the goal is not to control their lives, but to equip them to live their own.