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Back to School 2023 for Parents:
New Year, New Start: Start Strong
and Avoid Back to School Blunders

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Peace⁺
of MIND

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Parent How to Be a ~~Mom~~ in 2023


Make sure your children's academic, emotional, psychological, mental, spiritual, physical, nutritional, and social needs are met while being careful not to overstimulate, underestimate, improperly medicate, helicopter, or neglect them in a screen-free, processed foods-free, plastic-free, body positive, socially conscious, egalitarian but also authoritative, nurturing but fostering of independence, gently but not overly permissive, pesticide-free, two-story, multilingual home, preferably in a cul-de-sac with a backyard. Also, don't forget the coconut oil.

ELIA PARSONS

baby chick

@thebabychick

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A black and white photograph of a woman with long, wavy hair lying in bed. She is propped up on one arm, looking directly at the camera with a weary expression. A young child is lying next to her, facing away from the camera, and is using a laptop. The room has a striped headboard and a patterned bedspread.

Why am I so exhausted?

- Cognitive load
- Uncertainty and disruption
- Rituals and routines
- Structure and warmth


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A black and white photograph of a woman sitting on the floor, looking directly at the camera with a distressed expression. She has her hands pressed against her cheeks. In the background, a young boy is standing and looking towards the right, and a young girl is standing and holding a large, patterned cushion.

Anxiety

- Separation anxiety
- Social anxiety
- Performance-related
- Health related anxiety
- Selective mutism

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Anxiety Manifests Differently


Early childhood – fear, clingy, disturbed sleep, tantrums

K-3 – fear, clingy, physical symptoms, avoidance, panic, anger

4-5 – fear, clingy, physical symptoms, anger, refusal, withdrawal, shutting down, panic,

6-8 – fear, avoidance, physical symptoms, anger, irritability, withdrawal, tantrum, panic, self-harm

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Coddling vs. Confronting Anxiety

Common Response:

- Role of avoidance
- Comforting can backfire

Instead Do this:

Externalize it – name it

- Recognize what it "wants"
- Give it the opposite


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Big Emotions

- Expect emotional regression
- Expect regression in comfort seeking
- Calm first, then empathize (restate their emotion, it makes sense...) offer time to comfort themselves, problem solve but with calm brain

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Interviewing for Injury

- We tend to be very engaged when things go wrong
- Teaches kids there might be something wrong with them
- They might begin to only bring us the negative

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Trust yourself

- They really only need 2 things: warmth and structure
- The hard times are times of growth
- They are part of the family, not the centerpiece
- Model taking time for yourself, your interests

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Homework Help or Hindrance?

- We are what we practice daily
- Kids who do well have a plan, a person, a place
- Role of Executive Functioning

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Homework Help or Hindrance?

- When/how to support homework across ages without taking over
- Getting out of homework management in middle school
- Enlisting tutors if needed to avoid being the "manager"

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Perfectionism Pitfalls

- How perfectionism hurts: unpacking the low self-regard beneath high standards
- Celebrating progress over outcome; persistence over grades
- Quitting/ afraid to try, academic dishonesty as dark side of perfectionism

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Protecting Mental Health

- MH is not “feeling happy or good all the time”, but appropriate emotions to circumstances
- Negativity bias and setpoint for optimism
- Resilient people are connected people

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“Mattering”

- Antidote to perfectionism
- Protective of mental health
- Discuss ways kids can matter at home, school, community

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- Start young (preK) with chores and contributions. Persist even when it gets hard. This is a more important experience than athletics, grades, social time
- We need your help – not a punishment or arbitrary “burden”
- Build volunteering in your family’s schedule and expectations. Doesn’t have to be huge project. Open doors, carry bags, walk dogs, weed gardens, how did you lighten someone’s load today?
- Conversations about how you want to be remembered in 150 years – making meaning in your life


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Parenting in Two Moments

- Managing conflicts while modeling future relationships
- Dangers of emotional reactivity; resetting yourself
- Teaching respect to kids by modeling you respect yourself; their expectations for future

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Parenting includes grief

- Our job is to make it so they no longer need us
- Self-compassion
- Good enough parent