

# Parenting in Medicine

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# Objectives

- Review normal development and deviations to monitor
- Good-enough parenting recommendations
- Review approaches to finding the integration of work and personal life ideal for you

# Normal Development

- 0-6 months
  - Lifts and holds head
  - Reaches for objects
  - Holds objects
  - Smiles
  - Turns toward sound
  - Starts to sit with help
  - Rolls in both directions
- Enjoys music players, mobiles, small rattles, mirrors, bells and squeaky toys
- **Parents should talk to their infants while doing things with them**



# Normal Development

- 7-12 months
  - Sits without help
  - Crawls
  - Pulls to stand
  - Pincer grasp
  - Fear of strangers (can be earlier)
  - Puts objects in container
  - Cruises
- Loves books, balls, blocks, see-n-say
- **Parents should play peek-a-boo, talk to infants while interacting**



# Normal development

- 1-3 years
  - Walks without help, crawls up and down stairs
  - Stacks 2-3 blocks
  - Imitates play
  - Names pictures in books
  - Multi-word vocabulary, puts words together
  - Follows directions
  - Names body parts
  - Climbs on furniture, runs, and kicks ball
  - Begins being negative
  - Eats and drinks by self
  - Temper tantrums
  - Asks simple questions
- Loves books, peg boards, wind-up toys, balls, riding toys, blocks, dolls, large lego's, cars, paints, bubbles, puzzles, large crayons
- **Parents should encourage the child to communicate with words, and carry on conversations with toddlers**



# Normal Development

- 4-6 years
  - Skips and hops on one foot
  - Walks down stairs alternating feet
  - Draws a 3-6 part person
  - Tries to please others
  - Copies simple figures
  - Shares and takes turns
  - Plays simple board games
  - Throws and catches ball
  - Uses please and thank you
  - Changes mood quickly
  - Has many fears (separation, darkness, storms)
  - Sings simple songs
  - Asks "why" often
  - Dresses and undresses with little help
- Loves construction sets, puppets, tools, magnifying glasses, musical instruments, board games, puzzles, stickers, string and bead sets, paint, miniature figures
- **Parents should allow child to make choices when possible**
- **Parents should encourage child to ask questions and talk about their feelings**



# Normal Development

- 7-12 years
  - Permanent teeth erupt
  - Starts pubescent changes
  - May have “growing pains” – emotional or physical
  - May experience fatigue
  - Cares for pets
  - Draws, paints
  - Assists in household chores
  - Likes quiet as well as active games
  - Comprehends and can tell time
  - Starts to think abstractly
  - Proud of school accomplishments
  - Enjoys reading
- **Parents should explain expectations in advance of activities**
- **Parents should allow child to have some control**
- **Provide privacy**
- **Promote independence, define behavior limits**
- **Major fear is loss of control**



# Normal Development

- 12-18 years
  - Rapid growth of skeletal size, muscle mass, adipose tissue, and skin
  - Maturation of the reproductive system
  - Onset of menarche in girls, nocturnal emissions in boys
  - Awkward in gross motor activity
  - Can be easily fatigued (related to growth spurts – emotional and physical)
  - Increased ability to use abstract thought and logic
  - Able to handle hypothetical situations or thought
  - Develops more self esteem
  - Interested and confused by own development
  - Often critical with own features and appearance
  - Interested in romantic attractions
  - Longs for independence but also desires dependence
- **Parents should give rationales with expectations/consequences**
- **Parents should encourage questions**
- **Provide privacy**
- **Involve them in planning and decision making**
- **Allow adolescent to maintain control when possible regarding their own day to day functioning**



# Hard Work

Balancing parenting and a demanding medical career requires intentional planning, strong boundaries, and a focus on both work and family well-being, including seeking support and prioritizing self-care

You didn't become a physician overnight, learning to balance life as a parent takes practice and patience

Parents are tasked with modeling life skills, values, resiliency, and grit

Mother figures continue to bear the majority of childcare

Physician parents are more likely to experience work-life imbalance because of our workloads and unpredictable schedules

Surveys suggest that most physicians work 40 to 60 hours per week, and some work up to 80 hours per week

# Hard Work

There is nothing like parenthood that brings us face-to-face with our own insecurities and doubts

Children are full of wonder and are also great at making us question every day if what we are doing is the right thing

Each of us must authentically show up as humans first and be healing our own wounds so we can better care for our children

As parents, we sometimes forget that our children are more emotionally intuitive than most adults; they know us sometimes better than we know ourselves

When we are not okay, they can sense that in us



# Authoritative Parenting

- Positive reinforcement
  - Effective commands
  - Selective ignoring
  - Scheduling
  - Setting limits
  - Timeouts
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- Better grades, less anxiety and depression, higher self-esteem, more socially competent, more self-reliant, less antisocial

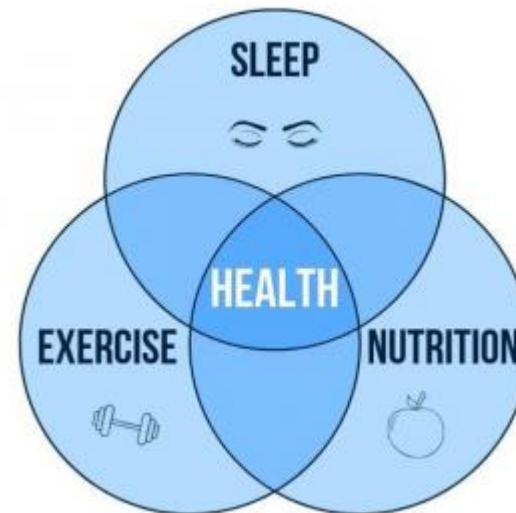
# Supervision

- The more parents know about their children's lives, the fewer risks children take and the less emotional disturbance they suffer – let them tell you
- The more we engage our youth in prosocial, school-based, volunteer activities, the less drug and risk-taking behavior they engage in



# The Basics

- Good Nutrition
- Adequate Exercise
  - Enhances cognition and academic development, improves social and emotional functioning, alleviates mild and moderate depression
- Sufficient Sleep
  - Improved emotional functioning, improved memory and attention, less lability and impulsivity, higher Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, fewer absences, less tardiness, better decision making, decrease in motor vehicle accidents



# Limit Screen Time

Limit Screen Time

Know what they are engaging in online



# Pitfalls

- Authoritarian -- high demandingness and low responsiveness, often with little room for negotiation or explanation. Children of authoritarian parents may develop traits like good compliance and obedience, but they might also experience fear of punishment, difficulty with independent decision-making, and potential emotional or behavioral problems.
- Permissive --parents are highly responsive and nurturing but exert minimal control and expectations over their children's behavior. They often avoid conflict and punishment, providing few rules and allowing children to navigate situations independently. This can lead to children who struggle with following rules, respecting authority, and developing self-regulation.
- Negligent -- lack of responsiveness to a child's needs and desires. It's characterized by a lack of guidance, discipline, and emotional support. Parents in this style often prioritize their own needs over their child's, providing basic necessities but neglecting emotional connection and guidance.

# Designate Clear Hours

Allocate specific times for work, personal, and family activities, including taking parental leave and vacation and your lunch break! Block off time for family meals, activities, and bedtime routines

Don't overcommit yourself

Prioritize tasks and commitments that align with your values

We are taught to always give 110%, and that often means saying “yes” to every request. This sets the stage for burnout and work-life imbalance

Often, physicians view saying “no” as a sign of failure, but we can actually find peace and power in “no.”

Instead of making a “to-do” list, try making a “to-don't” list

Finish notes and answer messages before leaving work

Avoid taking work home routinely

Turn off work devices after work hours and leave work on time

Parenting may bleed into the workday (e.g., returning calls from day care, checking in with a child's teacher, or coordinating transportation to after-school activities), but try not to let work infiltrate your home



## Helpful Tips

Spend 1 or 2 days a week doing all the laundry and cleaning OR do a little every day. Taking a few minutes to load the dishwasher at night and put in a load of laundry every morning can keep the mess from piling up.

Set reminders on your phone until these routines become second nature

Batch cooking -- Preparing large portions, dividing them up, and freezing individual servings for busy days

Consider grocery delivery or a prepared meal service

# Use Your Resources

Delegate tasks at work and home, and seek support from family, friends, or childcare options

Weekend programs at the library, religious activities, or even trips to the playground are good places to network with other parents in your community and brainstorm ideas

Consider joining local or online support groups tailored to physician parents

Parenting apps offer tips, tracking tools, and support networks

Many medical institutions offer resources like lactation rooms, childcare services, and flexible scheduling

Ask your human resources department for information about what's available at your facility

# Self Care

Make time for activities that recharge and rejuvenate you

Preserving our own identity outside our careers and parenting is important because these traits, goals, and hobbies can energize us and make us more effective in our other roles

Simple pleasures such as having lunch with friends, conversing in the hallways with colleagues, hitting a bucket of golf balls, or treating ourselves to a milk-shake on the way home from work are fundamental to our well-being

Forgive yourself; Recognize you are doing your best

Focus on what you are grateful for and your accomplishments

Stop comparing yourself to other parents

Consider part-time or flexible work

Recognize that work-life balance is a journey, not a destination, and be prepared to adapt your approach as needed

Look for a job where you like your coworkers and feel respected

# Hard Work

Parenthood is a marathon

Parents in this generation are struggling with higher demands of work and trying to give their children a safe upbringing while protecting them from growing up too fast

Parenthood demands the very best of us no matter the lack of sleep or rest in a similar way that medicine has a history of doing

Take care of ourselves first and foremost, address our needs, desires, and wants, and sometimes even whims

Remember you are replaceable at work but never at home

# Balance versus Integration

Instead of trying to balance separate roles, integrate your professional and personal lives to create a more holistic experience

Recognize that your roles as a physician and a parent are valuable and contribute to your overall well-being

Show your children the importance of work-life integration and the value of both your career and your family



# Communicate

Inevitably, there will be times when work spills into family time. Conflicts may happen in your personal and professional life, or your child may get sick unexpectedly, requiring you to shift your schedule or seek additional help

Sleepless nights are also a common problem; for a busy physician, it can feel like there are no breaks. Being self-aware and letting others know when you're struggling can help prevent you from lashing out under stress and damaging relationships

If you have a partner at home, work in tandem to accomplish everyday tasks and ensure everyone's needs are met

Set clear expectations that everyone can agree upon

Reevaluate with regular check-ins about what's working and what's not. The same goes for hired nannies, relatives, and your work colleagues

Keep everyone in the loop if you're running late or have an issue so they're not left waiting or wondering what's happening.

# Impact on Your Career

Even physicians with a lot of support at home may experience instances where the demands of their careers conflict with the needs of a growing family

It is not unusual for physicians to make temporary adjustments to accommodate their personal lives

Working part-time or putting off a promotion may be the right choice if you find yourself consistently overwhelmed

Connect with mentors who know what it means to be a physician and a parent



# I Should Know This

Physician parents may find themselves in the unexpected position of feeling unsure

Despite extensive medical knowledge and experience caring for patients, you might be surprised to feel lost if your child gets sick, has an injury, or shows signs of developmental concerns

Just because you're a physician doesn't mean you don't need guidance on caring for your children

Seek guidance from your child's pediatrician, parenting books, family, and friends when navigating uncharted territory as a parent



# Quality Time

It is valid to question whether we are spending enough quality time with our children

Are we in a place emotionally and psychologically to provide a safe space for children and our patients?

Either we are winning, or we are learning



# Priorities

What are the days that feel better? What do they involve?



# Loyalty

Be more loyal to yourself than any company

Be in love with yourself first before anybody else



# Evolution

Some periods of parenthood can be painful, but over time, you should appreciate yourself, your body's resilience, and your capacity to grow and develop in ways you had never imagined

Find peace in the evolution

Accept discomfort as an invitation to your growth



# Why Are We Here

Most physicians once loved their jobs or the idea of it

Most of us went into medicine for the love of patients and for the idea of doing something greater than ourselves

When you lose your way, you can find your way home even if it's not where you thought it would be



# Questions

