



Taking Time for Your Self-Care

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Self-Care Aware

The list below includes some ways parents can practice self-care.

Select 2-3 activities that stand out as important to you.

- ☐ Eating healthy foods,
- ☐ Savoring a cup of coffee or tea,
- ☐ Going for a walk or other exercise,
- ☐ Spending time with friends,
- ☐ Listening to a favorite song,
- ☐ Being grounded in the present moment, or meditating,
- ☐ Taking a relaxing bath,
- ☐ Spending time in nature,
- ☐ Reading or joining a book club,
- ☐ Writing down a few things you are grateful for,
- ☐ Journaling,
- ☐ Exercising or participating in a favorite sport or hobby,
- ☐ Having a date night, and
- ☐ Maintaining spirituality
- ☐ Other:

Researchers have found that there are benefits to parents practicing self-care.

- Being more accepting of yourself and others,
- Having appropriate expectations for how to view yourself as a parent and knowing there are no perfect parents,
- Being more in control and able to think more clearly in parenting situations,
- Parenting differently than how you were parented and being more involved in your child's life, and
- Modeling more positive behaviors for your child so they can learn good coping skills.

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The Balancing Act

Parents of infants and young children often struggle with finding a healthy balance between responding to the needs of their children and meeting their own needs.

Asking yourself these questions can guide you in making the best choices:

- What does my child need right now? What can wait? Will there be negative consequences for my child if I do not respond to this need quickly?
- What do I need right now? Can it wait? How can I fulfill this need later?
- Do I have to choose between my child's needs and my own? Is there a solution that can work for both of us? What are my options?

Times I may need to use these Balancing Act Questions:

Times I need to put my child's needs first:

**Remember, meeting your child's needs first does not mean you forget about your own needs, only that sometimes your needs must wait until later.*



Let's Take a Break!

What my child/I liked best about this activity:

What are some ways I can support my child to keep the play going:

*I used **The 4 Me's™** when:*

How to Do This Activity:

1. You can complete this activity using any household or creative supplies you have on hand. As you follow the steps, remember to refer to **The 4 Me's** to practice the skill you're most interested in exploring with your child. For example, you can practice **Encourage Me** by pointing out your child's efforts or by saying positive things about your relationship with them.
2. Create or invite your child to help you create a poster using pictures and/or words representing different self-care activities you can enjoy doing TOGETHER. Try to come up with activities you can use in the moment and ones that require planning. Some examples are stretching, taking deep breaths, doing art activities, sharing a book, journaling, drinking water, making a healthy snack, etc.

As you create the poster with your child, you **MIGHT**:

- » Imagine what it will be like to do self-care with your growing baby after they're born,
- » Talk to your infant about all the things you can do together for family well-being and wait for their response,
- » Invite your toddler to share different activities they enjoy,
- » Encourage your child to scribble, draw, color, or write on the poster, and sound out words with them, or
- » Decide together on a visible place to put the poster and support your child to repeat or select another self-care activity to do together now.

