



**Educating
Matters**

Parents are a child's first and most important teacher

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO
BE A
'GOOD ENOUGH'
PARENT**

By Rachel Vecht

Being a parent is probably the most responsible and challenging role we will ever have, with the least amount of training. When we are stuck in the thick of it, it is very easy to lose sight of what our purpose is.

We seem to spend so much precious time impossibly striving to be perfect parents, amidst a 'self-sacrificing ideal parent culture' filled with conflicting advice.

There is often a large gap between what we expect of a good parent and who we actually are.

We may feel we are losing our identities in the service of our children and children may think the world exists to serve them.

Comparing, judging, feeling fear and guilt is unhelpful and unproductive. All the rushing around for our kids in a fiercely competitive culture is driving everyone crazy (kids and parents).

You can be so focused on parenting and everything that needs to be achieved, that you push your children away and lose sight of the most important element; **RELATIONSHIP & CONNECTION.**

We may have this mistaken impression that every other parent is pulling it off but you can never actually know what is going on behind closed doors. Many parents feel guilty that they don't spend enough time with their children and need to prove they are good parents.

There needs to be more time and space to just be.

Perfection at work and at home is unachievable.

Our main role as parents, apart from providing a calm, secure, loving haven is to prepare our children for adult life. It is very easy to lose sight of that purpose when you get bogged down in everyday demands.

As a mother of 4, sometimes I feel more like a chauffeur, chef, cleaner, nurse, entertainment director, PA or banker.

So what does it actually mean to be a good enough parent?

Of course it is very subjective and there are also considerable cultural differences depending on where you live and how you were raised by your own parents.

Drawing on almost 30 years of experience, working with tens of thousands of families and very extensive reading about parenting, I think the main things parents should focus on to be 'good enough' (in no particular order) are on the following pages.....



The logo for 'Educating Matters' features a stylized purple figure of a person with an open book inside their torso, rendered in a teal color.

Educating Matters

Parents are a child's first and most important teacher

Emotion coaching

Be nurturing, loving and supportive.

Our children need us to be like ‘an emotional container vessel’, to sit with, acknowledge and empathise with their emotions.

Help them learn how to self-regulate and understand that all feelings are acceptable.

‘Special time’

Frequent, predictable, short, scheduled, unstructured bursts of 1:1 time for each parent to spend with each child.

Be mindful, conscious and really ‘with’ them.

Values

Teach values like gratitude, empathy, independence and kindness .

Our main role is to raise good human beings, to be the best version of themselves.

Boundaries and expectations

Children need clear boundaries to be safe and accountable for their actions.

Growth-Mindset

Foster a ‘growth’ mindset (see the work of Carol Dweck) to boost confidence and self-esteem

‘Grit’

Grit is one of the best indicators of success in life.

The ability to set your mind to do something and stick with it. (See Angela Duckworth). To raise gritty kids, lose the self-sacrifice and let your child struggle a bit rather than rescuing.



Educating Matters

Parents are a child's first and most important teacher

Mistakes

Allow your children to grow, be independent and make mistakes. Let children truly experience the consequences of their choices, rather than hovering and over protecting.

Keeping calm

Learn how to regulate your own emotions and reactions, so most of the time, you can manage their mistakes in a calm, positive way. To do this you absolutely need to look after yourself.

Relationship

Building a strong, connected relationship is really the only way to influence them over time.

Modelling

80% of parenting is modelling

It's much less about what you say and far more about what you do. Children of all ages are constantly observing the example set by their parents/ carers.

Descriptive praise

Focus on and acknowledge what they do right rather than pointing out what they do wrong.

This is far more motivating and allows them to flourish.

Aim for a magic ratio of 5:1.

5 positive comments to every 1 negative.

Learning

Instil a love of learning

They don't have to be highly academic but help them grow, find their passion and interests.

Enjoy your child

Love the child you have unconditionally for who they are and not what they accomplish or the child you wish for.

A small exercise you can do to be clearer about what 'good enough' looks like for you personally is to divide a piece of paper into 2 columns.

One labelled 'Too much' and one 'good enough'.

Brainstorm what comes to mind in each and try to work out how to reduce the time and mental space taken up with the activities in the 'too much' column.

The amount of time spent together is not as important as what a parent brings to the relationship.

Don't feel under pressure to create perfect 'family time' or be perfect by other people's standards.

Children need relaxed, unstructured downtime and so do parents. These are the childhood memories they will carry with them.

How do you want your children to remember you and the time you spent together when they grow up?

My digital course provides all the tools to raise a child to thrive.

[Click here for more details](#)

