

Create a Child Who is Easy to Parent

by Raelee Peirce

In today's fast paced environment, parents are looking for ways to create a peaceful, cooperative, and happy home. In hopes of finding the right parenting skills, many parents have turned to counterculture philosophies of gentle discipline, attachment parenting, and non-violent communication.

[Dr. Gordon Neufeld](#), author of *Hold On to Your Kids*, helps parents understand attachment theory in a whole new way.. [Neufeld](#) explains that parenting skills, being responsible, and parental love are all positive elements in helping us achieve our goal of parenting well and creating children who are easy to parent. Interestingly, he points out that it is, ultimately, the love our child has for us that will allow a child to be easily parented. Thus, he is pointing out that it is imperative for us to create a loving, connected relationship with our children in order for our child to want to please us, listen to us, be influenced by our values.

It's common knowledge now that parents in our society are struggling to parent the modern-day child. I'm incredibly interested in why this is occurring. We are often berated by previous generations because of our lack of confidence, skills, and assertiveness. Our grandparents are shocked at, what they perceive to be, a permissive parenting approach.

It is my opinion that, yes, there does seem to be a wave of permissive parenting in response to the strict and punitive parenting we received. However, [Neufeld's](#) ideas are very interesting. He believes that our culture lacks attachment and that it is because of this that our family structure and parenting is suffering. We really are living in a different time with different values than we had in the past. Both parents and children today are not the same as the parents and children of yesteryear. He suggests that our culture today places a greater value on making money than on nurturing and developing relationships with our own family. He suggests that the rituals around relationship building are infrequently practiced.

For example, greetings and farewells are a big part of attachment cultures. Smiling warmly, embracing, and saying "hello," as well as ensuring that one says good-bye to bridge the absence - these simple cultural rituals are a dying form in America today.

He believes that children who have rhythm, structure, and ritual part of their daily lives are better behaved than those who live without it. That it is our values and expectations that are communicated to our children through our daily rhythms.

I am very fond of the [Waldorf](#) approach, especially for young children. [Waldorf](#) philosophy is grounded in the idea of creating rhythm for children. I think moms today can be overwhelmed or panicked when they hear that rhythm is so important because we live such busy lives and often our schedules are unpredictable and anything BUT rhythmical or structured, even when we want them to be. Also, we may immediately think that creating rhythm implies rigidity and time-lines.

It should be relieving to understand that a "rhythm" is not at all rigid, but rather *simple and flexible*.

In my exploration of healthy eating lately, I read an article about our natural bio-rhythms. It explained that there is a link between weight gain and light. Before electricity, people would rise with the dawn and go to sleep shortly after sunset. The light from the sun provides a natural bio-rhythm. We know that lack of sleep can actually increase the body's craving for carbs and since so many moms meet the needs of their families during the day, we find ourselves up late at night, trying to help little ones settle down without monster fears, fulfilling our task lists, or squeezing in time for ourselves. Yes! We admit it, we lack sleep and yes, even crave carbs.

No wonder Ma Ingles looked so relaxed and parented so well - she was so well rested, ate organically, and lived every day in rhythm!

Through these reflections, I am again reminded that simple, flexible rhythms and daily ritual is not only important to my children, but can slow the pace of life down and allow *me* to parent well and enjoy my children more.

In [Sharifa Oppenheimer's](#) book, *Heaven on Earth*, she helps parents understand how to create daily rhythm. Simple rituals upon waking like... "stirring the herbal tea, or setting out bowls and spooning the oatmeal. They can help with their small broom as we sweep after the meal." Doesn't that sound lovely?

I am beginning to understand just how key it is to make things more simple when it comes to parenting young children. It can be hard to actually put an end to [hyper-parenting](#)! There's so much for parents to do with young children that take us away from our home, puts us into large groups of people and children, overstimulates their small bodies, infuses them with lots of sugar and processed foods, and overall creates an insatiable thirst in our children for *more*. More entertainment, more sugar, more "fun."

My work as a mother is really pushing me towards finding a way to find my daily rhythm and small rituals in order to return to a more simple way of being together. It doesn't mean I won't schedule to go to the Museum of Life and Science for an afternoon or that I refuse to enroll my child into any extra-curricular activity.

It means that we can start our day together making our tea and our oatmeal or frozen waffles with peanut butter together, take our time, watch for birds or the fuzzy carpenter bees hover on the porch.

Yes, it's earthy-crunchy and granola too. I don't know about you, but the sweet innocence of slowing down is spiritual for me. All of sudden sound, color, and breath become beautiful and something that I notice. I crave it because our world has become interrupted by media, electronic toys, and children who are over-sugared, over-stimulated, over-tired, and insatiable.

So mamas, I invite you to enter the next few weeks with the thought of changing one part of your day to become more rhythmical. For us, our night time rituals are very meaningful and come more easily. Thus, I'm going to work on our mornings. Summer is a wonderful time to enjoy our children, not become overwhelmed by them. Let's put the attachment theory and rhythm

theory to the test, mamas. Will we see improved behavior if we slow down and impose a more predictable rhythm into our lives?