



# Superparents Don't Exist

Have you ever met a superparent? This mythical person holds down a demanding job, cooks elaborate meals every night, maintains a spotless house and never loses his or her temper. Chances are you've never seen one of these people, even when you look in the mirror. That's because superparents exist only in your imagination.

Is the mythical superparent your secret role model? If so, you're probably placing unrealistic demands on yourself and your family. Here are some things to keep in mind when you find the specter of the superparent lurking on your shoulder:



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## **Review your values.**

The most important aspect of parenting is nurturing your child. Your ability to provide love, constructive discipline and guidance to your child is far more important than your attendance at every school event or your recipe for double chocolate chip brownies.

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## **Plan ahead.**

Learn to apply to the homefront some of the long-range planning skills you use at work. Hold weekly family meetings to discuss chores and expectations and to clear the air. Use a master calendar to post weekly menus and to schedule appointments and special occasions. Plan menus and shop in advance. Cook large quantities of freezable suppers.

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## **Keep housework in perspective.**

You don't have to be a perfect housekeeper to be a loving parent. If you're overwhelmed by the endless cycle of laundry, cleaning and shopping, take time to prioritize and organize your chores. Delegate tasks to older children. Reevaluate your standards. Is it really necessary to have a matching tablecloth and napkins for your 5-year-old's birthday party?

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## **Choose care providers you trust.**

Ask friends, relatives, employers and schools for referrals. Visit prospective providers and notice how much attention is given to each child. Evaluate safety precautions, food quality and physical space. Use the time you spent worrying about child care to strengthen your parenting and communication skills.

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## **Make time for yourself and your spouse.**

In order to be a confident parent, you must first tend to your own personal needs. Always find a way to keep part of yourself for yourself. Make time for exercise and quiet relaxation. Your relationship with your partner or spouse is part of the glue that keeps your family together. When you feel overwhelmed with family and work demands, make a date to take your spouse to a romantic restaurant or a movie.

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## **Forget perfectionism.**

Remind yourself that children can thrive with less than perfect parents. If you think you're expecting too much of yourself, ask yourself whose standards you're trying to meet. If you think that your high standards are impossible to meet, don't despair. You can learn how to relax and enjoy the scenery. You'll be a more effective parent and a happier person.