



Parenting during pandemic

Day 22: Parenting from the frontline. Protecting your family while looking after everyone else's.

If you are a frontline worker during the pandemic and a parent, there are likely to be a number of extra worries for you compared to others at this time. Many parents feel torn between their career and their family at times and this may well be one of those times. There are a lot of pressures. You may feel you have to be at your work to afford to look after your family and/or because you feel a loyalty to your work and/or you worked hard to get to where you are in your career and/or you feel for your colleagues and the public and/or you are not really convinced the place can run as well without you. At the same time, you may feel that you should be there for your family. You may worry about the physical risks. You may worry that you are not keeping up with the home schooling given everything else you have to do. Or, you may be away from your family at this time to keep everyone safe. If this is the case, you are likely to be missing your children and during a very difficult time for you, you are also away from your support system.

Well, essentially this blog today is about going through something really difficult, acknowledging that it's difficult and that there's no way around that, so committing to meet it straight on and heading right at it. If you are worried about your children during this time, look around and notice that the whole world is telling them that frontline workers are heroes. This is the story of how they came to realise that they are living with a real live hero. You may feel less like a superhero and more knackered than you have ever been before, but for your children this can be a superhero story and you can feel better when you speak to them about it in those terms.

So let's think about it. Superheroes often wear uniforms and have to think about personal protective equipment. Ok, so maybe it's usually some kind of shield or armour but it's still PPE. Every superhero cartoon or movie your child will have seen will have had some reference to the fact that superheroes are brave and that it doesn't mean they are not afraid or worried, it just means they feel the fear and do it anyway. Lots of superhero movies show sacrifice to be a superhero and the fact that superheroes put others before themselves. It's important to note that often at the end of the movie, the superhero is less shiny and perfect

than at the beginning. There is acknowledgement that they are often a bit beaten up as part of the journey but they come out of the other side as heroes.

It may surprise you to know that there is actually some research evidence that standing like a superhero makes people feel more confident. Some people do this before job interviews and things to help them feel confident before going in. So being a superhero in real life actually changes things for us a bit for the better.

What will your children learn from watching their superhero parent? They will learn about loyalty and commitment. They will learn about people coming together against a common difficulty. They will learn about people using their brains and their skills to overcome something big and scary. They will learn strength and bravery and courage. They will learn resilience and coping skills and a sense that they can get through things, even really hard things. They will learn that they are protected and since children often look up to their parents in their thoughts about their own future, they will learn to be superheroes too.

At the end of all of this, as a frontline worker, you will know that you did everything you possibly could to help everyone you possibly could to manage one of the most difficult times we will ever go through in our lives. You might be knackered and a bit beaten up by the journey but you will also know then, even if you don't now, that you are a superhero...and your children will know it too!

We hope these tips are helpful. Well done on managing another day off school and we hope you will join us again tomorrow.

Tomorrow's topic: Managing with children of different ages at home during the pandemic.

Please contact us with questions, comments or topics you'd like to see covered. We'd love to hear your feedback.

Wishing you a safe and healthy path through this pandemic.