

Parent's Bill of Rights

How to Parent and Still Maintain Your Sanity

1. Create an environment for you, a place where you can get away from the baby and be yourself. Figure out what you want to do in that environment. Do not get so involved with the baby that there is no "you" left.
2. Create an environment for your relationship, a place where you and your spouse can be lovers and friends. There is nothing wrong with locking your bedroom door. There is no need to worry about the effects – which are probably minimal – on the child who may find you in the act of lovemaking, but parents need private time together without interruption.
3. Set aside some time for yourself each day as a person – not just as a parent.
4. Find time for friends.
5. There can be no room for martyrdom in your parent-proofed life. We all make sacrifices for our children, but continued martyrdom is not healthy for your children **OR** you.
6. Pay attention to your own physical and mental health.
7. Keep your own future in mind. Although you will be a parent all your life, roughly two decades after you decide to have your last baby, you will become an unemployed parent.
8. Pay attention to your own needs. Parents sometimes fall into the trap of putting the children first in all considerations. Parents who feel good about themselves and their lives are generally successful as parents.
9. Do not expect to enjoy every minute of parenting any more than you enjoy every minute of everything else.
10. Do not feel guilty about your parenting. Sometimes parents have the wrong information, sometimes they do things they regret because they cannot help it, sometimes they are victims of their own upbringing. There are no perfect parents.

