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Our ambitious dream at The Parenting Place is for Aotearoa New Zealand to be a place where every family flourishes and every child feels deeply loved. For over 20 years, we have been inspiring and equipping whānau to thrive through a range of nationwide programmes, resources and events. We also connect with a quarter of a million young people each year, encouraging them to lead resilient, connected lives through our Attitude programme in schools.



Toolbox courses inspire and equip families. They are bursting with great advice, humour and encouragement, offering practical strategies and insights into developmental stages. The courses are run over six weeks in a relaxed and conversational small group setting with a trained facilitator. The four courses – Building Awesome Whānau, Early Years, Middle Years, and Tweens and Teens run nationwide throughout the year.



Sometimes family life is way more challenging than we ever imagined. Family Coaching is designed to meet you wherever you are on your parenting or relationship journey. We want to be on the journey with you. Our coaches will listen to you and bring their extensive training and experience to help bring new insights, ideas and practical solutions.

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HOT
TIPS

PARENTING ALONE

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It's the catch cry of the toddler, that call to independence all parents hear at some point, "I can do it myself." It's the struggle to work out just how to stand on one foot while you get your jeans on, find a toilet in time, or how to get the blocks stacked without them crashing to the floor.

It can be the hardest thing to watch when you know you could get it done yourself so much faster and better. But you know as a parent that it will one day pass and your tantrum-throwing toddler will be exchanged for a kid who can get their own breakfast and get dressed without any help.

It's an important analogy for when you suddenly find you're a single parent trying to sort out how to do everything alone – on a fast and furious learning curve. Like that toddler, it can be intensely frustrating and may bring on the odd adult tantrum, but if you work through it, it really does get easier.

There is no doubt about it, parenting alone is a big job. To make it easier on both you and your children, give the following tips a go.

START AND END WITH GRATITUDE

Being thankful for the good things (no matter how small) will remind you that you can and will do this well. If you struggle to remember anything to be grateful for, keep a list you can add to. Before you get out of bed, be thankful for your little list, then do the same at the end of the day.

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BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Adding pressure to your job by filling your head with all the 'shoulds' you need to achieve to keep your kids happy and healthy doesn't actually help. Having a bad day? Make cheese on toast or eggs for dinner. Dishes can wait until the morning, if necessary. It doesn't make you a bad parent.



GET YOUR KIDS ON BOARD

With just you, the jobs mount up. Even young children can pick up toys. Give them regular jobs, and reward their work with the thing they want most of all – more free time with you. Create a real sense of team.

SET BOUNDARIES THAT SUIT YOU

If your children are spending time in two houses, this is especially important. Make it clear what behaviour you expect and what your house rules are. Children will adapt to two different raising styles if necessary.

TALK IT OUT

Stress builds up if you don't have people to work it out with. Find other single parents, family members and friends to talk things over with. Offloading helps relieve the pressure.

CARE FOR YOURSELF

Finding time for yourself is one of the most important coping strategies you can adopt when you are a single parent. And no, going to work does not count. Money may be tight, but find ways to get the time out you need.

If you have young children, establish regular bedtimes and have an 'adult-only time' rule after

a certain time in the evening. Single parents need some child-free unwinding time in their house.

If you can't afford to pay for childcare but need some time out, find another parent to swap babysitting times with. Make a list of free or low-cost things you can do, such as going for a walk, having a coffee, or reading a pile of magazines in the library, and book in regular 'just you' time.

If your children have regular time with their other parent, avoid the temptation to fill every child-free moment with social engagements. The luxury of a night home alone in a quiet house is often far more beneficial than a night out with friends.

KEEP THE FUN ALIVE

There's a lot of serious stuff going on when you parent and an added load when it's all up to you. Carving out some time for fun will be beneficial to everyone and lets your children know you enjoy their company.

Keep it simple and realistic. Be clear on expected behaviour. Stop the game if it goes sour. Be prepared for almost anything. Take water bottles and snacks to keep the cost down.

- Use local parks and pools for inexpensive fun
- Do your own movie nights at home with popcorn and drinks you've sourced yourself
- Set up an obstacle course
- Visit the sand dunes
- Go to the beach
- Climb trees
- Make huts in the lounge
- Play hide and seek outside at night with a torch
- Bake a cake
- Play a game of marbles
- Practise magic tricks
- Go for a bike ride
- Play miniature golf
- Blow some bubbles
- Fly a kite
- Bike ride to a special destination
- Play a board game
- Enjoy a party for no reason!