

# How to Become a Mindful and Attentive Parent

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Each January, I consider how I can do a better job of balancing my daily life when considering my family's needs, work obligations, and needs for play, exercise, and spiritual growth. When I consider my family's needs, I find that my ability to give sufficient attention and listen to individual family members can be challenged when working on another project or trying to multi-task to finish a household chore. This coming year, I plan to overcome this challenge by becoming more mindful and attentive in my daily interactions with family members. I also plan to track how many minutes a day I am able to focus on individual family members when they are talking to me or when I am engaged in one-on-one activities. I plan to also implement the following time management strategies:

## Time Management Strategies

Simplify each day by reducing the number of chores

attempted each day.

Cook dinners three times a week with planned leftovers on alternate nights.

Encourage teens and other adults to alternate cooking meals and help with meal preparations.

Schedule 30 minutes a day with each child and teach the family to respect the time allocated for each child. (Through consistency and example, children learn quickly how to respect each child's allocated time.)

Give myself an hour a day for exercise, meditation, leisurely reading, or thinking.

Schedule another hour a day to spend with my partner so we can talk about our lives and brainstorm solutions to daily challenges.

Limit the time spent watching mindless television shows and playing on the computer or phone.

Manage my work schedule.

Consider how frequently I am leaving the home at night for meetings, social events, and errands.

Adjust my schedule to regularly be home at night for the family.

Consolidate errands and limit them to a couple of times a week.

Brainstorm other strategies to spend more time with family and less time being preoccupied with daily responsibilities.

## More Family Play

May your new year be filled with more family time. As you and your children brainstorm solutions to managing daily tasks, they will thrive because you will be more

relaxed and have more time to play. When parents model effective parenting and household management strategies, their children feel valued. They also have the opportunity to talk with their parents when they feel challenged with family members at home and with the demands at school.

Much success with mindful parenting!

Mary Ann

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