



Dr. Ashley Morgan, C.Psych. (Supervised Practice). She works at Vaughan Psychologists, along with Dr. Arbus, Dr. Weidenfelder and Associates. The office is located in the Maple Medical Arts Building at the corner of Major Mackenzie and Keele. She can be reached at 416-801-8889 or [www.vaughanpsychologists.com](http://www.vaughanpsychologists.com)

# Keeping It Positive

## strategies for staying positive when parenting

ON MARCH 2015 | IN LIFESTYLE | BY ASHLEY MORGAN, PH.D. | WITH 2 COMMENTS

Parenting can be one of life's most prideful and joyous times. However, with the ongoing demand of work, school, extracurricular activities and play dates, it can become challenging and overwhelming. Having some tools and coping mechanisms in place can make all the difference. In this article, I have provided some valuable ways to help you cope with the stress associated with parenting.

Realistic Scheduling:  
Keeping up with our overscheduled lives

Reflect on the commitments that you may be involved in and determine, based on your family's schedule, what is realistic. One way to cope with the demands of a busy schedule is using time management strategies such as writing down your plans on a family calendar, determining which events are most important and prioritizing your time accordingly. Don't feel guilty if you have to turn down an event, people will understand. Communicate your thoughts by sending an email, text, or a note to kindly decline and express your appreciation of their offer. Ensure that your schedule includes time for self-care and relaxation, which will benefit you and your children. Life can get hectic and it is important to find peaceful stress-free times for yourself and your family.

Be Tech-savvy

Parents and kids are bombarded with advertising campaigns containing messages about having the latest gadgets and apps. Today, social media and websites can make them feel that their life is not as exciting as others, putting them at high risk for stress and anxiety. We tend to believe what we see, making it difficult to distinguish reality from pictures. For instance, a teenager expressed she was at the most boring party, but the pictures on social media made it appear to be a fun party. Parents should talk to their children about the truth of social media and how to limit its use. Furthermore, there are some websites that directly target an individual's self-esteem. A well-used website allows people to ask any questions, usually about themselves, and the people who answer do not need to post their name or personal information. When a website demands personal information for no apparent reason, your child needs to be taught to stay away.

Moreover, you can teach your children media literacy by encouraging them to ask questions about what they see and hear, hence showing them the significance of critically evaluating the messages that are received. Engaging in open conversations with your children is vital to keeping them safe while surfing the Internet.

### Make Memories

Rather than focusing on items such as cell phones and video games, try shifting their attention to activities that you can do together such as baking, going on hikes and making time for arts and crafts. These are great opportunities not only to develop creativity but also to create lasting memories while contributing to the development of their self-esteem. Children thrive when spending quality time with their parents and family members. Create a space every day where you put your own electronics away and demonstrate good listening skills, good communication and genuine interest in your child and their life. This positive message will promote self esteem, self worth and give you personal satisfaction as well.

### Physical Activity:

Turn it into family-friendly fun

Family outings and outdoor activities allow children to be physical while benefiting from parent-child interaction, improving cardiovascular health, releasing mood-boosting endorphins and reduce stress. Ask your family what their favourite outdoor activity is and set a time for that. Having a scheduled time may help to ensure the family's commitment, which is important to all involved. Going for a walk, skiing, skating, swimming, building a snowman together, or playing soccer at the park are all wonderful ways to have fun.

### Self-care:

Often the missing piece

Busy schedules, schoolwork and careers put enormous demands on parents leaving little time for adequate self-care. Getting enough sleep and relaxation are essential for maintaining positive mental health and energy. Sleep is often what parents need most, and learning to survive on a reduced amount of sleep is often the true plight of parenthood. This is more reason to engage in self-care practices. Relaxation may be different for everyone, but can include taking time to read, watch television, go for a walk, cuddle with your child, or partake in some other activity that you find enjoyable. Perhaps enjoy a bedtime routine that encourages quiet time and good sleep habits. Encouraging your children to do the same will be beneficial for all. Many relaxing activities can also be done together as a family.

### Positive parenting throughout the year

There may be times when your parent-child relationship becomes strained. Your child or teenager's behaviour may become especially challenging, but you don't have to go at it alone. Clinical Psychologists can be a great resource where parents can learn positive parenting strategies to improve a strained

parent-child relationship. Psychologists regularly help families work through difficulties, support changes and assist families in managing difficult times. When a family is committed to the well-being of all members, they can make incredible strides that promote physical and emotional well-being. Families who work to make the needed changes can see the difference in their relationships which can far exceed their expectations.