



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
for




how to
HAPPIER



BE • A
PARENT

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Introduction

(You might want to save these for last if you want to get to any of the others!)

It's hard to actively say we're not happy as parents—but how happy is your day-to-day? How happy were you at 4:45 yesterday afternoon?

What gets in the way of your happiness as a parent?

Ten mantras for happier parents

Do any of the mantras immediately resonate with you as something you already practice or want to practice?

Which would be the easiest and hardest of the mantras for you to apply? Why?

Mornings Are the Worst

What's the most challenging thing about mornings for your family?

What new habits from those suggested could you implement to help change your morning story?

Chores: More Fun If Someone Else Does Them, and Your Child Should

Describe the current chore situation in your family—what chores do you expect your children to do and how are the expectations enforced?

What household tasks do you want your children to be able to do independently when they set out on their own? What chores (or assistance with chores) could they reasonably do now that would help achieve that goal?

Siblings: They Can Bring the Fun, and They Can Take It Away

If you have sibling children, what's going really well in their relationship(s)?

How do the conflicts of jealousy, property rights, space occupation, and pure devilry present themselves in sibling squabbles in your family?

Which of the strategies suggested (accept the negative, let relationships evolve, keep the fun ratio high, sibling time that isn't family time, seeing the good times, and soaking up the good) would you try out to improve sibling conflict at your house?

Sports and Activities: Fun for Everyone, Except When They're Not

If your children are involved in sports and activities, why did you get them involved in the first place? Are those goals being met?

What are the most challenging aspects of your children's involvement in sports and activities?

Even if it seems impossible, what changes would you make around sports and activities that would make life happier for your family—whether it's skipping tournaments, changing a practice time, or having someone else make dinner. Are there requests you could make (even if it's intimidating) or things you could do (even if they cost money) towards those wishes?

Has your child experienced a failure or wanted to quit while participating in a sport or extracurricular activity? How did you respond and is there anything you would change about your approach in the future based on what you read?

Homework: More Fun When It's Not Yours

“Homework that goes out of the house is far less important than the homework that's coming in and what happens when it gets there.” What's happening at your house when homework comes in and how do you feel about it? How do your children feel about it?

If there are homework struggles in your family, what are ways you could address the situation through changes in your attitude towards homework and/or talking to a child's teacher?

Screens Are Fun, Limiting Them Is Not

How are children and adults using screens in your household?
Are digital double standards being set by the adults?

What rules and conversations do you want to have with your children to facilitate the “evolution from parent-monitoring to self-monitoring” of screen time?

Discipline: This Hurts Me More Than It Hurts You

When your temper rises in response to a child’s behavior, what tactics are most effective in helping you “respond not react” and maintain your calm?

How might you implement the suggested rules for parents the next time you encounter kid misbehavior? Are there any rules for parents that you would add?

Food, Fun, and Family Time

What’s the current dinner situation in your house?
What’s going well? What’s hard?

What family rules do you have about what happens around the table?
Are there any you would like to add or to enforce?

What family food values do you have and how do you talk about them with your children?

Freetime, Vacations, Holidays, Birthdays, and Other On-Demand “Fun”

What are the top five things that you enjoy during a vacation?

How are children’s birthdays celebrated in your family?
Are there ways you could “do birthdays better”?

What are your favorite calm and crazy memories of family vacations, birthdays, and gatherings?

