

Are We Perfect Yet? Cut It Out!

Allison Rees

Are you a perfectionistic parent? Are you always urging your child to do better? Do you withhold full approval frequently urging your kids to do better? If so you really need to CUT IT OUT! A perfectionist drives himself too hard. A perfectionist frequently says, "If you can't do something right, you can't do it at all!" He can't just relax and enjoy life; there is always something to do. He is rarely satisfied with himself or other members of the family. When it comes to parenting, perfectionists have difficulty letting kids be kids. They imagine that people are scoring them based on the behavior of their children. This causes some short and long-term problems. Some kids will keep straining to gain the parental approval. They will miss out on feeling satisfied with themselves and miss out on the joy of childhood. Other kids will openly rebel saying, "What I do isn't good enough so why should I bother trying!" Their self-esteem will be fragile as they develop a severe inner critic that will accompany them through life. The cycle of perfectionism will continue through generations until somebody can finally say, "Enough!" or at least, "Good enough!"

- **Recognize your tendency to set standards that are too high. It may be in one area of your life but not in others.**
- **Once you take some ownership of your own issues, it keeps other people safe. They can start to separate your issues from theirs. This can break the cycle that otherwise keeps going generation after generation.**
- **Learn to say "good enough" and allow yourself to rest and play.**
- **Share your struggle with perfectionism honestly with your family.**
- **Avoid correcting and criticizing family members when they have completed a task below your standards.**
- **Avoid taking over and completing jobs for your children.**
- **Realize that children don't always have to do their best. Nobody does. We save that for things that are really important or that we are really interested in.**
- **Encourage yourself and your children by appreciating effort even when results don't look great.**
- **Permit yourself and your children time to "goof off" .**
- **Accept each child's unique level of interest and ability.**

