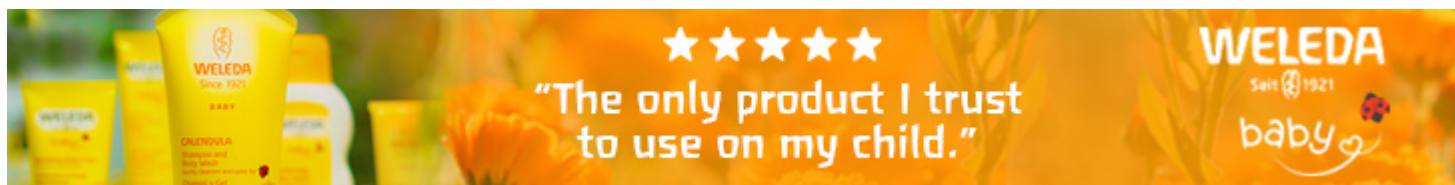


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I can't do it all as a SAHM—and that's okay

By Rachel Babcock



Feed the kids. Get everyone properly dressed (if you're lucky). Educate the kids. Entertain the kids. Cook constantly. Clean constantly. Manage finances. Do the 100th load of laundry that day. Plan all the parties for all the events. Meet mom friends. Join mom clubs. **Socialize your kids.** Save all the money. Make money. The list goes on and on and on and on.


When I first dreamed of being a stay-at-home mom, I visualized that I would have it all together. I would have our days planned every day, filling them with stimulating and engaging activities.

I would be a part of a huge circle of awesome moms and awesome kids. My house would be spotless and I would look cute every day doing it all.

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I truly felt it would be amazing to be home and that I could do it all. News flash: I'm on kid #2, and I *do not* have my stuff together. I do okay most days, but there are also really hard days.

With a 2-year-old and a newborn, things are hectic all the time. The house is often "spot cleaned," there are hampers of laundry to be washed and hampers of clean laundry to be folded and put away (in the next 7-10 business days).

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hair for its nest. Let's face it; my appearance is often a hot mess. This is just a chaotic time of life having two littles.

I'm always picking and choosing what to focus on:

Is the house going to be cleaned or are the kids going to have fun?

Is the laundry or the dishes the one "fun chore" I have the kids "help" me with that day?

Am I going to eat, shower, or sleep in the 20 minutes I have of overlapping nap times?

Most days, when I finally put my feet up, I feel like a complete failure. I didn't get any of the perfect mom things done that I had planned that day.

On these days where I only manage to play with my kids, there is one thing that reminds me of my worth: my husband. When he arrives, he always asks about my day and we begin doing chores together. We clean the kitchen and switch off entertaining the kids, and we talk about our workdays. He's always interested in hearing about the silly things our son said and the new toys our baby likes, and he praises me for the work I did being a mom.

Because that's the reality, we *both* worked all day! My husband worked in an office contributing to medical advancement, and I worked in our home contributing to our children's advancement. Being a team with my husband at the end of the day and having him just as interested in my activities as I am in his reminds me that my work is important, too, even when we play all day.

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After spending a lot of my nights feeling bad about my lack of accomplishments each day based on the standards I gathered from society on what I should be able to get done, I realized I was not a failure based on my family's standards.

No, I'm not doing it all, and that's okay.

Because what I am doing is *important*. It might not be getting all the chores done and teaching my kids a second language, but it's important work, nonetheless. It's important for my kids' development. My value as a stay-at-home mom is not only in the quantifiable output of tasks in addition to child-raising. There is immeasurable value in the indispensable time spent in raising little humans.

I get a lot done in one day. I kiss owies, push swings and teach how to share. I give bear hugs, play chase and tie shoes. I make meals, sing songs and show love to my babies day in and day out.

But no I can't do it all, and I'm not supposed to, despite what society says. As much as I hear the message or believe that "I'm not getting anything done" during my days as a stay-at-home mom, I know that I am doing my most important work being present with and raising my babies. The things I do with my children matter more than checking off everything on my to-do list.



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