

CanCan Mom Tips for Making the Most of

MOM MOMENTS



As a mom of eight, I have learned a lot. Most importantly, moms are more present and patient when they care for themselves—and when there are clear routines, solutions, and goals.

Here are 35 things that I wish I had known from day one of motherhood:



FOR YOURSELF:

Always make time for yourself, even if it's just taking a shower and styling your hair or putting on a nice outfit.

Love and take care of yourself. When your kids see you taking the time to do this, it teaches them to take care of themselves as well.

Be sure and give yourself “Mommy Time-Outs” on a regular basis. Even if it's locking yourself in the bathroom with a magazine for 10 minutes if your kids are old enough to be left alone—it can do wonders to refresh you.



Find your own hobby and practice it on a regular basis. You need to be fulfilled to be the best you can be for your family.

Pursue your own interests even if it's only for a short time each day or week. (I wish I had written for 10-15 minutes every day.)

It's okay to have a good cry.

Don't be afraid to ask for help.



Don't isolate yourself. Make sure you have at least one or two other moms or girlfriends who you can count on and trust. They can make the biggest difference for you when you're going through a tough time.



FOR YOUR KIDS:

Tell your children that you love them every day.

When hugging your kids, no matter what age, don't be the first to let go.

Make eye contact when you're praising them, telling them you love them, or simply acknowledging them when they come into the room.

Listen when they want to talk. If you try to do a lot of the talking yourself, you're going to miss what they're really trying to tell you.

Follow the 80-20 rule: 80 percent of your interactions with your kids should be positive and only 20 percent negative.

Catch and praise them for doing something good instead of pointing out something they did wrong.

Foster their creativity, even if you think it's something crazy.

Create an Idea Jar where everyone in the family contributes ideas for ways to spend time as a family. These ideas can include anything from one-on-one time or a whole family event. This gives everyone's voice a chance to be heard. Just don't forget to put your own in, too!



Record their voices when they are infants, toddlers, and youngsters—it goes by so fast!

Keep a journal for each child, even if you only record a few things every few weeks or months—these memories will be priceless in years to come.

When they're little, physically get down on their level to play and interact with them—you'll see things from a whole new point of view.



If you have a child with learning delays or challenges, be their biggest cheerleader!

Cherish the simple things like when your three-year-old picks you a bunch of dandelions.

When they begin to read, be enthusiastic and encourage them to have a love affair with books.

Always remember—kindergartners tell their teachers everything!



When your children embarrass you in public, just remember that someday you will laugh about it.

Help your kids build a special relationship with their grandparents.

Say “get to” instead of “have to.” For example: “You and your sister get to have your teeth cleaned by the dentist today!” It makes a difference in their response.



Model appropriate behavior. Kids learn and imitate what they see.

Never put your spouse down in front of the kids.

Teach them responsibility with age-appropriate chores.

Teach them financial responsibility at an early age.

Let them make mistakes—it's the only way they'll learn and be prepared for real life.



Don't wish for what they will be able to do tomorrow or
you'll miss what they're doing today.

REMEMBER THIS:

Your kids will only be kids for a short time. You can't catch up on their childhood once it's gone so it's okay if you don't accomplish all your errands and housekeeping.

You don't live in a museum. Don't kill yourself to have a pristine house. You want your kids to remember their childhood home as a place where they could play, explore, and make messes.

There will be many, many difficult days in your journey as a mother, but they will pass. After all, it's part of the job.



Our kids are not our property. We have been entrusted with their lives for a very short period of time. We need to love them, teach them, let them fall down, encourage them, believe in them, and then...proudly let them go.



I interact with love, even laughter, more often than impatience—not always an easy feat with eight children—and you can, too, by following the hard-earned wisdom I share in my CanCan Quick Steps for moms.

