

Pleasant Hill/Walnut Creek Mothers' Club

Are You Ready to Be a Parent?

Preparation for parenthood is not just a matter of reading books and decorating the nursery. Here are 12 simple tests for expectant parents to take to prepare themselves for the real life experience of being a mother or father.

1. Women: To prepare for maternity, put on a dressing gown and stick a beanbag chair down the front. Leave it there for nine months. After nine months, remove 10% of the beans.

Men: To prepare for paternity, go the local drug store, tip the contents of your wallet on the counter, and tell the pharmacist to help himself. Next, go to the supermarket. Arrange to have your salary paid directly to its head office. Go home. Pick up the paper and read it for the last time.

2. Before you finally go ahead and have children, find a couple who are already parents and berate them about their methods of discipline, lack of patience, appallingly low tolerance levels, and how they have allowed their children to run wild. Suggest ways in which they might improve their child's sleeping habits, toilet training, table manners, and overall behavior. Enjoy it -- it's the last time in your life that you will have all the answers.

3. To discover how the nights feel, walk around the living room from 5 p.m. until 10 p.m. carrying a wet bag weighing approximately 8-12 pounds. At 10 p.m. put the bag down, set the alarm for midnight, and go to sleep. Get up at 12 a.m. and walk around the living room again with the bag until 1 a.m. Put the alarm on for 3 a.m. Since you can't go back to sleep, get up at 2 a.m. and make a pot of tea. Go to bed at 2:45 a.m. Get up again at 3 a.m. when the alarm goes off, sing songs in the dark until 4 a.m. Put the alarm on for 5 a.m. Get up. Make breakfast. Keep this up for 5 years. Look cheerful.

4. Can you stand the mess children make? To find out, smear peanut butter onto the sofa and jam onto the curtains. Hide a fish stick behind the stereo and leave it there all summer. Stick your fingers in the flower beds then rub them on the clean walls. Cover the stains with crayons. How does that look?

5. Dressing small children is not as easy as it seems: first buy an octopus and a string bag. Attempt to put the octopus into the string bag so that none of the arms hang out. Time allowed for this--all morning.

6. Get an egg carton. Using a pair of scissors and a can of paint, turn it into an alligator. Now get a toilet paper tube. Using only scotch tape and a piece of foil, turn it into a Christmas tree. Last, take a milk container, a ping pong ball, and an empty packet of CoCo Puffs and make an exact replica of the Eiffel Tower. Congratulations, you have just qualified for a place on the play group committee.

7. Forget the Miata and buy the mini-van. And don't think you can leave it out in the driveway spotless and shining. Family cars don't look like that. Buy a chocolate ice cream bar and put it in the glove compartment. Leave it there. Get a quarter. Stick it in the cassette player. Take a family-size bag of chocolate cookies. Mash them down the back seats. Run a garden rake along both sides of the car. There! Perfect!

8. Get ready to go out. Wait outside the toilet for half an hour. Go out the front door. Come in again. Go out. Come back in. Go out again. Walk down the front path. Walk back up it again. Walk down it again. Walk very slowly down the road for 5 minutes. Stop to inspect minutely every cigarette butt, piece of used chewing gum, dirty tissue, and dead insect along the way. Retrace your steps. Scream that you've had as much as you can stand until all the neighbors come out and stare at you. Give up and go back in the house. You're now just about ready to try taking a small child for a walk.

9. Always repeat everything you say at least five times.

10. Go to your local supermarket. Take the nearest thing you can find to a pre-school child with you. A fully grown goat is excellent. If you intend to have more than one child, take more than one goat. Buy your week's groceries without letting the goats out of your sight. Pay for everything the goats eat or destroy. Until you can easily accomplish this DO NOT even contemplate having children.

11. Hollow out a melon. Make a small hole in the side. Suspend it from the ceiling and swing it from the ceiling and swing it from side to side. Now get a bowl of soggy Fruit Loops and attempt to spoon it into the hole of the swaying melon by pretending to be an airplane. Continue until half of the Fruit Loops are gone. Tip the rest into your lap, making sure that a lot of it falls on the floor. You are now ready to feed a 12-month old child.

12. Learn the names of every character from 'Barney and Friends', 'Sesame street', and 'Power Rangers'. When you find yourself singing, "I love you, you love me" at work, you finally qualify as a parent.

Congratulations! 😊