



By Sarah Fernández

## TOUGH DECISIONS TO MAKE? YOU'VE GOT THIS!

We all know parenting doesn't come with an instruction manual. This is especially true when it comes to raising children in the middle of a pandemic. Many of us have been weighing decisions about school, childcare, travel, and more in these uncharted waters. In our case, Isaac was supposed to start VPK this year, so we've also been in the valley of indecision, wondering which option would be best for him and our family. Each family will face different factors, and you will too as you decide what's best for you: your child's age, personality, style of learning, medical issues, your family's finances, work flexibility, the level of help/support you have available, what precautions are being put in place at your child's school/daycare, and how comfortable you are with those precautions.

Whatever decision you make, the two most important things to remember are:

**1. You are doing a good job.** These are hard choices for many, often with complex factors, and the best decision is one that works best for *your* family. Your decision may look different from other parents' in your life,

and that's okay. We can't downplay that this is an incredibly challenging time for all of us, and everyone is struggling in their own way. Right now, we're being asked to carry a load that, as parents, we were never meant to carry on our own.

**2. Your narrative matters.** We don't need to suppress our authentic feelings, and we should allow ourselves to grieve all the changes this pandemic has brought on our lives and society. Yet, while we can admit this is not ideal, we are capable of figuring out solutions, and this situation is an opportunity to model resilience for our kids.

We help determine our child's attitude. Find an outlet for those feelings of frustration, anger, or sadness through a therapist, trusted friends or family, journaling, music, or whatever works for you. And if you have a bad day and let those feelings out in front of your kids, give yourself grace, too. None of us will get it perfect, and our mistakes are another opportunity to model empathy, humanity, and forgiveness to our kids; you're still doing a good job.

We're all in this together.