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The Mom Moment

It's not your mother's motherhood.

MOMMY STRATEGIES

How are you teaching your son to respect girls?

● "I encourage both of my sons to be friendly to the girls in their class and to include them in their conversations, even if it's about *Pokémon* or *Star Wars*—they shouldn't assume that girls aren't interested in those kind of things too!"

Elise Caccappolo, 41
New York City

● "Whenever the words *That's a girl thing!* come out of my 7-year-old son's mouth, I try to find examples that counter the idea. When he decided recently that boys don't dance, we downloaded a couple of clean Justin Timberlake videos from iTunes. Now he's happy to dance around the kitchen with his two sisters!"

Teresa Sellinger, 40
Sparta, NJ

● "I have taught my boys, ages 5 and 7, that they must always allow their girl friends to order first at lunch and have the first turn at playing games. I'm also teaching them to hold the door open for their female friends. I feel that these are good ground rules to establish so that they will respect women as they get older."

Laura Feiner, 38
Davie, FL

● "I remind my 6-year-old that his grandma and I were both little girls once, and so were a lot of the important people in his life, including his teacher and his doctor. But it didn't really sink in until he met his new tae kwon do teacher—a female black belt. Now he's really making the connection that girls grow up to do cool things!"

Randi Pellett, 41
Rockville Centre, NY



Making single parenting work

Single moms work more outside the home and don't have another adult to share the load. So when University of Maryland researchers looked at the schedules of 6,000 mothers, they expected to see a gap in the number of hours the single parents spent interacting with their kids. "Amazingly, these women managed to devote up to 90 percent as much time with their kids as married women do," says Sarah Kendig, one of the study's authors. Here's how solo moms make their hours with their kids count.

Turn chore time into quality time.

"I do everything with Sabena, age 5, from emptying the garbage to cleaning the house," says Kathleen Reynolds, a 45-year-old mom of one in New York City. "I make her feel like we're a team: She loves putting the coins in the washing machine at the laundromat and helping me cook dinner. I don't think she cares what we're doing, as long as we're doing it together."

Make bonding moments fit your budget.

"For a special treat, I take my three kids to McDonald's for \$1 sundaes," says Erika Murrell, 27, of Amelia Island, FL. "I've also found a place to rent DVDs for \$1, so we can have an inexpensive movie night."

Connect even when you're apart.

"My 6-year-old daughter and I paint our nails together the day before she leaves for her week with her dad," says Mikalee Byerman, 35, a divorced mom in Reno, NV. "We use the same color, and I tell her that if she misses me while we're apart, all she has to do is look at her fingers or toes and remember that Mommy is wearing the exact same nailcolor."

Don't sweat the small stuff.

"It's easy to get bogged down in the minutiae of daily life, such as work, bills, and cleaning, but I've learned to just let it go," says Jenna Petroff, 34, of St. Louis. "The other evening, instead of running errands, I hung out with my 5-year-old and answered his questions about why the grass is green and why God lives in the sky. The next day he said, 'Mom, I really liked talking with you last night.'"