

PANDEMIC PARENTING ADDRESSING THE CHANGING FAMILY DYNAMIC

By Michelle Dell'Aquila,
M.A., Parenting Coach



Though it's true some families thrived and even embraced the time together during the pandemic, others saw a huge disconnect. Perhaps existing divides were further frayed, or seemingly healthy relationships were suddenly fragmented. From changes at work and financial complications to suddenly becoming full-time caregivers, the family dynamic was undeniably impacted. Our children were suddenly navigating the new remote-learning space, while dealing with the lack of important socialization. Now infants and "Covid babies" are developing differently, elementary-school children are experiencing more social challenges, and adolescents are feeling more emotional and mental complications.

While more research continues to be released supporting these statements, we can clearly see the pandemic has had a tremendous physical, mental and emotional impact on each of us. With this disruption occurring during critical developmental phases, we're learning that younger children, specifically, are amongst the most negatively impacted by the changes brought on by the pandemic.

As children develop, the importance of interactive play outside with other children, and away from tech and screens, is extremely beneficial. There, they can learn how to interact with other children, learn to communicate, problem-solve and boost their confidence, as they experience their likes and wants in free-play. Once developing children were forced to stay home, they lost a huge piece of this basic, critical phase.

In addition, parents themselves were becoming burnt out—with the stress trickling down and being felt throughout the family. "Burned-out parents tend to distance themselves from their kids to preserve their energy," according to the American Psychological Foundation. It became too easy to put the TV on during "just this one meeting" to keep them occupied. Important calls might have meant tablet time to keep our little ones quiet. And more screen time often meant less two-way communication.

So what can we as parents do about this? How can we help our kids? Let's look at a few critical areas we can start. Strengthening communication is key. Communication is the foundation of positive, functional relationships. My experience has shown how many parenting issues originate from poor communication. With a lot of the families I'm seeing lately, the pandemic has had a direct impact on communication between parents and children. Learning how to choose your words and adjust your tone to encourage your child to listen and stop tuning you out is imperative. In addition, we want to foster two-way communication in which parent and child both feel heard and valued. It's hard to learn how to stand strong in your role as a parent while supporting your child's independence and individuality, but by taking the right steps to create positive, long-term habits you will definitely see improvement.

Furthermore, we must take a look at the role technology is playing in



Get surprisingly great Auto rates.

Nancy H Morris Agcy Inc
Nancy Morris, Agent
22 Bayview Avenue
Manhasset, NY 11030
Bus: 516-365-2525

Here's the deal, everyone loves a good surprise — especially when it comes to saving money. State Farm® has always been about that. Call us to discover your surprisingly great rates on Auto today.

Like a good neighbor,
State Farm is there.®

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company
State Farm Indemnity Company
Bloomington, IL

State Farm County Mutual Insurance Company
of Texas
Richardson, TX
2001860




3V DENTAL 516-944-7000
A LIFETIME OF HEALTHY TEETH AND GUMS 3Vdental.com

INVISALIGN CROWNS VENEERS IMPLANTS BOTOX & FILLERS



Ask about our
**NEW PATIENT
SPECIAL* AT \$149!**
and
**\$50 NEW PATIENT
BOTOX DISCOUNT**

**Not valid with any other offers,
in absence of gum disease, new
patients only*

Come See Why We're Always Smiling!

BEST REVIEWS ON LONG ISLAND! 91 Main Street, Port Washington NY 11050

our little ones' lives. Children's use of mobile and interactive media has rapidly increased during the pandemic. A key factor to remember when it comes to screen time is the quality of the content. Is it an educational game or program? Will it teach the alphabet, how to read, or learn different numbers or words? These types of screen content can support and encourage the continuation of your child's education. Parents can set limits at an early age and be responsible for the amount of screen time their child receives. Young babies and infants are better off experiencing their world around them without the interference of technology. As they mature, they will have their interaction with screens and tech, and parents can make sure their interactions are limited and educational. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "The picture that has emerged suggests that the youngest children don't learn well from screens. As kids get older, they can learn meaningful information from screens, but the ubiquity of digital devices also means that children can easily spend far too much time being sedentary. Nevertheless, total abstinence from recreational screen time may backfire for older kids and teens."

Another thing that is becoming clear is the importance of children being taught the basics of emotional intelligence. After the pandemic, people are obviously realizing how important academic environments are—but we have to teach resilience and empathy and patience and understanding. And that's not always taught in school. Now there is a huge component of EQ that a lot of schools are starting to look at. Research has shown that those who are emotionally intelligent do better in both school and work. Emotionally intelligent people are better able to cope with difficult situations and people while performing at a highly successful rate both at work and in school. This resilience is key in ensuring our children can handle what's to come.

Feeling overwhelmed by all of this? You're not alone. And with so much information available, it's difficult to know where to start. When you are feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, or nervous about becoming a parent, your child's development, or your child's behavior, this is where I step in. For over 20 years, I've helped parents with proven, effective parenting strategies to regain a sense of direction in child-behavior management. My goal is to ensure that anyone who desires to raise resilient, positive, well-behaved children can access the guidance, resources and tools they need for successful parenting.

About Michelle Dell'Aquila, M.A.

Michelle is a New York State-licensed educational therapist who is certified to work with children 0 to 12 years old. She has 20 years of experience utilizing a multidisciplinary approach. Her work has been both independently and for Agencies that offer early intervention services.

Michelle specializes in parent coaching for families and is the director of ParentingCoachOnline.com, offering advice and proven strategies for all parenting goals.

Michelle fosters the healthy development of children, creating customized plans to support their physical, mental and emotional well-being. Michelle is passionate about her work; her greatest joy is helping families.

"My coaching philosophy provides a nurturing, positive, educational environment for parents and their children to learn, set goals, improve communication, and overcome obstacles. Using proven, effective strategies, I guide clients through a step-by-step plan specifically designed for each family's needs. My greatest pleasure is helping families grow together and restore harmony to their lives."



WHERE QUALITY CARE MEETS *Luxury*

516.719.9400

1440 PORT WASHINGTON BLVD.
PORT WASHINGTON

www.SandsPointCenter.com

