

Ep #81: The Hidden Time Drains of Parenthood



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Devon Clement

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Do you wonder where all your time is going now that you have a baby? Or if you're expecting, are you curious how your time is going to vanish before your very eyes? Stay tuned and I will tell you all about it.

Welcome to *Parenthood Prep*, the only show that helps sleep-deprived parents and overwhelmed parents-to-be successfully navigate those all-important early years with their baby, toddler, and child. If you are ready to provide the best care for your newborn, manage those toddler tantrums, and grow with your child, you're in the right place. Now here's your host, baby and parenting expert, Devon Clement.

Hello, hello, and welcome back to the *Parenthood Prep* podcast. I have not recorded in a very long time. What do they say, a dog's age? Something like that. Because mostly that I have been very busy recording something else that you will find out about soon that is very exciting. So we will be dropping that very soon. And today's episode has something to do with it. Also, that as I mentioned previously, I have been working with clients a lot more than usual for a variety of reasons. We've just been busier in a way that makes sense for me to help out with. So it's just been taking up a lot of my time, but it has also been giving me a lot of really good material to talk about and things I'm being reminded of and stuff like that.

Alex and I also took care of baby Audrey for a week, which was really, really fun. We will be taking care of her again this month, and I'm very excited about that. And it's really fun to see him. He really wants to learn. I think it is so easy for guys who have not been, you know, socialized to take care of babies or take care of kids, especially when they have a partner who has or is, you know, one of the nation's leading childcare and parenting resources, to be able to just let that go and just put it all on the partner. But he knows that I am not going to let him get away with that. So from day one when we had her, I was like, you know what, dude, this is you. You're doing it.

And to be fair, she is an absolute doll baby. She is so easy. She's in a great routine. It's super easy to feed her, it's super easy to put her down, she's totally sleep trained. So, he's definitely operating on easy mode, but he's really

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stepping up and it's so great to see. And I'm going to talk about that a little bit more as we get into this episode.

Also, this is so random, but I saw this tip on Instagram and I wanted to share it. As your kids get older, they tend to get a little bit, they can be a little bit weird about food. So maybe they're used to just, you know, eating the things that you make for them at home, and then you go to a restaurant and they want, you know, spaghetti with - noodles with butter or something, and the restaurant serves it to them with some parsley flakes on top because that's just the standard for how the restaurant serves everything, and your kid pitches a fit because they don't want, you know, green flecks on their food. Which for a variety of reasons is developmentally appropriate for kids to be like that, but it is also frustrating and challenging, especially when you're out somewhere in public.

So I just saw this tip in a comment that was like, I put parsley flakes on my kids' food at home. I don't know if it's every meal or just every so often, just so that they're used to seeing some weird stuff on their food so that when you go out to eat and there's parsley flakes on the food, that they don't freak out. So, just a random little tip that I thought was so simple and effective. So go ahead and start putting parsley flakes on all of your kids' meals so that they get used to it and don't wig out when you're at a restaurant.

So today I want to talk about time. New year coming up, you know, lots of saving time, taking time, spending time more wisely, all that kind of stuff coming out. And I want to talk about kind of the opposite of that, of course, which is where are the areas that your time as a parent is sort of unexpectedly being consumed. And this was something that I was reminded of again the week we had Audrey that there's all these different things that you're like, wait a minute, this takes a lot more time when you have a kid. So today we're going to talk about some unexpected time sucks that happen when you have a baby.

A lot of people go into the experience of having a baby thinking, okay, you know, yes, I'm going to be spending time feeding the baby and changing the baby and, you know, the baby's going to be sleeping, but you don't think about all the in-

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between stuff. Like the number of clients I've had who are first-time parents who were just absolutely shocked that during the night or during the day when the baby was fed and changed, that you couldn't just put them back down, that they wouldn't just fall back asleep, that sometimes you have to rock them and hold them.

And then you put them down and then 15 minutes later they're fussing again because they don't want to be, you know, put down in their safe sleeping space. And you're spending a lot of time just on stuff that you never thought you'd be spending time on. You think, oh, well, the baby's going to take a nap, so that's when I'll take my shower and I'll, you know, do all this stuff that I want to do. And then the baby takes a nap for 15 minutes and you have to pick them up and then they want to sleep on you. And how are you going to take a shower when you have a baby sleeping on you? So, going to talk about a couple of unexpected time sucks I think when you have a baby that you're a little bit surprised by.

The first is the cleaning: washing bottles, washing breast pump parts, washing toys when they get spit up all over them. Washing additional laundry because not only do you have all the baby's stuff, but now you got poop on your shirt and you had to change your shirt three times in one day. Baby Audrey is absolutely perfect in every way, but she's a spitter-upper. She's one of the ones we call a happy spitter. And so I was changing my shirt so much more than I normally do. And not only that, but I was changing my shirt and having to wash it where normally, you know, I wear a shirt for a couple hours in the morning and then I change into what I'm going to wear to go out for the day and I just put that shirt aside and I wear it again. You can't do that with a baby.

A friend of mine recently had a baby. Congratulations. And she had him early and he was in the NICU. So she was pumping and she was going home, you know, visiting him in the NICU and then going home and she was pumping at home. And she was starting to get really frustrated with it. And she said to the nurse that she really hated pumping and she was thinking about stopping. And the nurse said, you know, is it the pumping that you hate or is it the cleaning? Like, do you hate the amount of time that you have to spend washing everything

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in order to be able to pump? And she was like, oh, actually, it's the cleaning. And the nurse said, you can just put that stuff in the dishwasher. Lo and behold, suddenly pumping was totally fine because she wasn't then spending 15 minutes washing the pump parts every time.

Same thing when we had baby Audrey, she's on four bottles a day. We would wash them and prep them. Even if I was washing as I went, which was pretty easy to do because it was only washing one bottle at a time, we were prepping them at night for the next day. She is on expressed breast milk. So defrosting the milk over the course of the day in the fridge, putting it into the bottles for the next day, getting that all ready to go. Sometimes there was some washing like if I hadn't gotten to it, and that was what we had to do at the end of the night every night. And it didn't take forever, but it was, you know, an additional extra chore after we put the baby down on top of putting our own dishes in the dishwasher, feeding the kittens, you know, all the things that we would normally have to do, brushing our teeth, etc.

So one night while we were watching her, we had already had tickets to a Broadway show, O Mary, which was great. So I got one of the doulas that works for me to come over and babysit her. And I said to Alex, are you excited to, you know, have the night off from the baby? And he was like, no, I'm, you know, I love the baby. I don't want time away from her, but I am very excited that someone else is going to wash and prep the bottles and we don't have to do that.

You know, you think about all these things when you have a baby and you just don't think about the additional workload that goes with, you know, all of the things around them. So yes, more laundry, more dishes, you know, more food prep. That leads me into the second thing, which is when you have an older child, like a toddler, they eat all the time. They have their three meals, then they have multiple snacks, then they didn't finish their dinner, so then they want a snack, they didn't finish their lunch, then they want a second lunch.

And you are just feeding them constantly around the clock. Like some days I don't eat until noon or one. I don't even think about like getting up and feeding a

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child. And when they're in that bottle stage or that nursing stage, it's easy, but when they get into, you know, eating foods, prepping the food takes a long time, cleaning up their food takes a long time.

And then, you know, sitting there and waiting for them to finish eating might take the longest possible time of all, unless you do what a lot of people do and just give in and feed them the stuff that they want instead of trying to get them to eat the stuff that you want them to eat, which frankly, I never blame anybody for. Toddlers are going to live on what they're going to live on. Some of them, I swear live on air and moisture from the environment because you don't really ever see them put food in their mouths and somehow it's fine. If you go back to my episode where I interviewed Dr. Danis Copenhaver, the pediatrician, we get into this a lot.

But the point is, you know, trying to get a kid to eat a meal can take a really long time, especially if you're trying to go someplace. When I was a nanny to a two-year-old, she did a lot of her eating in the car because it was just like, okay, you know, I'm picking you up from preschool, I'm going to give you a pouch and, you know, whatever, maybe a sandwich while we're in the car so that you're eating while we're driving, and then when we get home, you can go straight down for your nap and I don't have to sit at the table with you for an hour watching you pick at your lunch and get up and perform different dance shows and things like that. So finding time when they're focused can be really helpful with that.

Bedtime. Bedtime can be a huge time suck that you're not expecting. You know, you see in movies and TV that parents read the kids a story and kiss them on the top of the head and say, good night, I love you and tuck them in and then that's it, you see them in the morning. A lot of the time that's not what happens. Or with a baby, oh, we rock the baby to sleep and then we just put her down in the crib and she sleeps all night. A lot of the time that's not what happens. And I get calls from, you know, clients who want to do sleep training who are dreading bedtime instead of looking forward to it because it's such a rigmarole.

Like you have to do the whole routine: bath time, you know, feed the baby, read a book, whatever. Then you rock the baby to sleep or you bounce the baby to

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sleep, you go to put them down in the crib. Oh, they're awake. Okay, now the whole rigmarole has to start all over with the bouncing and the rocking and whatever else. And sometimes it takes, you know, multiple cycles or they do what we call a false start where maybe they sleep in the crib for 15 minutes, maybe they sleep in the crib for 40 minutes, but they're up again and you have to do the whole thing of rocking them to sleep, doing all that stuff to get them back down.

So that's where sleep training and getting them putting themselves to sleep is just so tremendously helpful because you can really just plop them into the crib or into their bed and say good night and see them in the morning. A client of mine once said that she after sleep training could dropkick her baby into the crib, not that she actually did that, but it was very funny. She's like, I just drop kick him into the crib and he goes straight to sleep, which I love.

Same thing during the day, naps. How many babies require a contact nap to get a really solid nap? Or maybe they only nap in the stroller. So you're going out for walks, long walks every day, which is great. What's better than a nice long walk? Except when it's multiple times a day and you have stuff you'd like to be doing at home or possibly resting yourself, or you just walked for two straight hours while your baby got fired up to want to play and you're exhausted.

So having to manage their naps - I used to take care of a little boy many, many years ago, they had an inside stroller because he would only sleep in the stroller. So they got a stroller that was kept inside the house and you would just walk him in a loop around from like the front hall through the kitchen to the living room to the front hall and around and around in this loop over and over and over while he slept. And you know, while that's happening, you might be listening to some podcasts, listening to some audiobooks, but you're not, you know, doing your stuff. You're not taking your shower certainly at that time.

So the contact naps and the, we'll call it managed sleep. The managed sleep is really not going to be effective for when you would like to get some stuff done on your own or take a break and relax. Also spending a lot of your time Googling, researching, agonizing over what to do about this, that, and the other thing. I

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hear a lot of parents are using ChatGPT now, which I mean, I guess I can see how it would be appealing as a resource. I am just always worried that they're going to give me some really inaccurate information, especially if it's something that I'm not super familiar with. So please always like double check when you're using that resource.

But you know, how much time are you spending Googling? How much time are you spending after your kids go to bed instead of watching a show on Netflix with your partner, you could be going and, you know, working out, you could be reading a book, you could be going to sleep, doing all these things that you could be doing, and instead you're staring at your phone or at your computer, agonizing over why bedtime takes two and a half hours and what you can do to make it easier for yourself. So that's just a lot of different ways that having a baby and having kids takes up a lot of that time for you.

What are some solutions to it? I mean, every problem has a different solution, right? First of all, you just have to sort of embrace that this is your life now and that it's going to take you a lot longer to get places and do things because you're also dealing with getting a baby ready or getting a toddler ready or trying to convince a toddler that they need to put their shoes on to go outside. Don't try to convince them that they need to put their jacket on. I see so many parents get into these arguments inside where it's warm and the kid cannot comprehend why they need to put on this heavy coat because their brains are just not connecting that once they get outside, it'll be cold.

First of all, if you're just going to the car, who cares? They can't wear their coat in the car seat anyway, so just bring them out in their clothes, let them get a little chilly, they'll be fine. They're not going to die of hypothermia in the two-minute walk to the car. But also, as soon as they get outside, they're going to be like, wow, I'm cold. And then you can have them put their coat on if you are, you know, walking somewhere or traveling somewhere and not getting in the car seat. So yeah, there's just a level of acceptance that needs to happen.

Also getting some help on board, getting some support. A friend comes over and says, you know, how can I help? Wash my pump parts, wash the bottles, throw

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in a load of laundry. Can you help me put this laundry away? Can you take this huge bag of laundry back to your house and bring it back to me clean? I would love that. I do that for people and it's the freaking best. My friends are always like talking about going to the laundromat and stuff. I'm like, just drop your laundry off here, I'll take care of it. Like I'm home during the day, I have a washer and dryer, it's not a problem. I enjoy doing laundry.

That kind of stuff, obviously getting your partner involved as much as possible, working on some of these things that you feel like don't need to be such massive time sucks. Like bedtime, is bedtime taking forever? Can we do some sleep training? Can we get them going down more easily at the start of the night? All of those things.

We're going to be talking more and more about these time sucks and what we can do to improve them, but for now, you know, step one is just identifying your time sucks. What is taking forever for you? And then start to troubleshoot individually which ones you feel like you can let go of. You know, grandma lives nearby and she comes over in the afternoons. Why doesn't she do the contact nap? Let her get some cuddle time in with her grandchild while you go to the store or you know, take a nap or whatever, you know, whatever you want to do.

Start identifying your time sucks. I would be so curious to hear about them and what you did to fix them or if you want some suggestions on how to fix them, hit us up on Instagram @happyfamilyafter. We would love to hear from you. And everyone have a great week and I will talk to you soon.

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Thanks for listening to this week's episode of *Parenthood Prep*. If you want to learn more about the services Devon offers, as well as access her free monthly newborn care webinars, head on over to www.HappyFamilyAfter.com.