



## 10 Tips for Avoiding the Land Mines of Perfect Parent World

By *ROSALIND WISEMAN* (from *Queen Bee Moms & Kingpin Dads: Dealing with the Parents, Teachers, Coaches, and Counselors Who Can Make--or Break--Your Child's Future*)

1. Know your kids, but never assume. Just like adults, children often show different sides of themselves at school, home, and with their friends. Another parent, teacher, or child could have a valuable perspective on your son/daughter that might never occur to you.
2. Step up to the plate. Sports are not automatically "male territory," and there's no reason a bake sale should be regarded as "women's work." Let your children see you stepping up and outside your comfort zone every once in a while.
3. Be aware of your social filters when you speak or act. Class, religion, race, and economic status all affect the way we view the world around us. Remember that you are not the only one who works, cleans the house, feeds the kids, and still manages to survive Perfect Parent World. Empathy is crucial to being a better communicator.
4. You are not a failure as a parent if you don't rescue your child from every misstep. In fact, you might be teaching him or her an essential lesson about integrity and values by not stepping in.
5. Teachers, coaches, and counselors deserve just as much respect for working with your children as you do for being the parent. No discussion will be productive if you walk into it thinking you know better than they do because you are the parent.
6. Your children will not become social misfits if you refuse to buy them the latest gadget "every other kid in school has." It's important to stick to your core principles on parenting even if that means going against the popular wave every now and then. Saying no to a cell phone will not scar your child for life.
7. Feeling like an outsider at PTA meetings does not excuse you from participation. You do a disservice to your children if you tell yourself "these parents are too difficult to deal with" or "I don't fit in" to avoid taking part in key school functions. You also don't have to commit your entire life in order to make a meaningful contribution. Participating in one volunteer activity a semester is great.
8. Know when to speak up. Caving into parental peer pressure when you don't believe your peers are right or choosing to stay out of a conflict because you don't want to deal with it often permits bullying parents to push their agenda through -- and your child is the one who'll have to live with that.
9. Be open to problems and solutions. This might seem obvious, but people are prone to see only their side of an issue, especially when it comes to their kids. A willingness to talk through all aspects of a problem, apologize (when necessary), and compromise gives children a model for how to handle their own challenges.
10. There is more than one "right" way to parent. Forget trying to become the perfect parent and be aware of the times when you hold other parents to this impossible standard. Parental judgment stops parents from being able to work together.