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How to avoid the “mummy guilt” of childcare.

KAT WIECZOREK-GHISSO

Despite the statistics of rising numbers of children entering childcare each year, for many us mothers, dealing with the overwhelming burden of guilt continues to be a daily chore. Coupled with the battle of navigating the morning routine in getting our child ready, it's no wonder we spend most of our day thinking up ways to avoid the commute altogether.

These feelings, whilst real, are born out of perceptions that when left in care, children are miserable all day. However, in most cases this couldn't be further from the truth. In reality your child is doing what most children in childcare are doing, learning vital skills which, coupled with your great parenting, will help prepare them for anything life throws at them. Therefore, are we really making a compromise, or is childcare a genuine necessity?

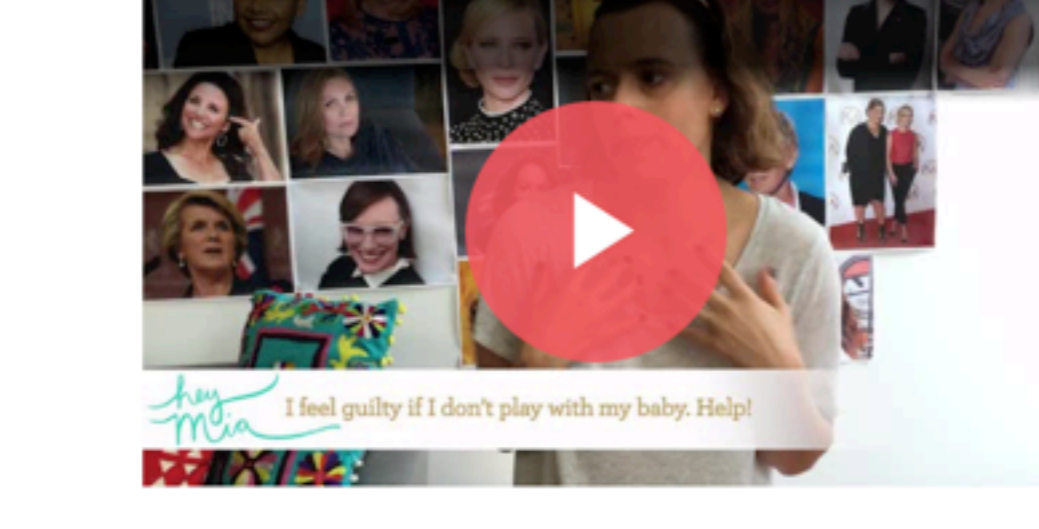
Your children are busy learning vital skills. Image via iStock.

Despite common attitudes that childcare for most parents isn't a choice, I'm of the belief that no matter what resources I had at my disposal at the time, I simply couldn't replicate the experience my child was having at childcare, let alone round up 20 odd other toddlers for them to socialise with. In reality, I think it comes down to a lack of knowledge about what goes on once we leave our children in the 'formal' care of others.

Childcare isn't a new phenomenon by any stretch. In fact, it dates back to the early 1950's as demand for women to enter the work force increased post Second World War. We have, however, come a long way from the 'backyard' care of the time.

Nowadays children are experiencing all sorts of wonderful things, from purpose built indoor play spaces catering to all their interests and needs, to abundant outdoor environments ample filled with tailored resources.

Mia Freedman answers a question from one of our readers: "I feel guilty if I don't play with my kids. Help!" Post continues below.



Thanks to advances in brain research over the last decade, attributing early childhood experiences to lifelong success, we have also seen a rapid increase in the quality of teachers educating our children. With all that in mind, one would think that childcare would be seen as something positive, rather than a guilty burden for parents.

Whether childcare is a necessity in your family or not, in my opinion, there are two ways to overcome the guilt trip.

Firstly, its important to have a close relationship with your child's centre, one beyond the 'drop off/pick up' interaction. Taking the time to find out how your child has spent their day will go a long way to reduce those feelings of guilt, as well form the basis of a good conversation on the trip home. These days, most childcare centres communicate their day activities in written form, often electronically; email, intranet, website, or App which gives parents an immediate snapshot of their child's day, hence link yourself to that community and engage regularly.

Secondly, plan for quality time spent with your child, outside of battling the grueling weekday routine. There are many, often inexpensive ways to bond and socialise in and out of your community. Local councils have on offer numerous free family activities throughout the year, hence get familiar with what's on, plan and head outdoors with your family. If heading out doesn't appeal, there are other ways to spend quality time with your child at home.

"Plan for quality time spent with your child." Image via iStock.


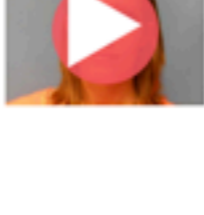
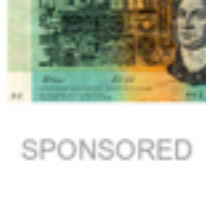

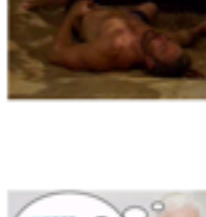
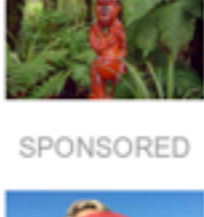
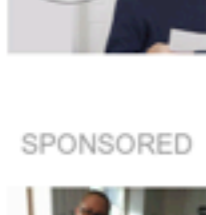
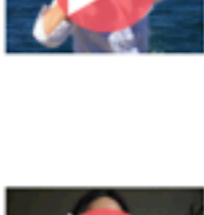

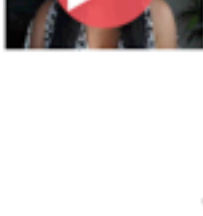
Some suggestions include:

- Prepare a picnic lunch in your backyard
- Read their favourite book or throw a ball
- Make some bubbles using detergent and watch them fly and pop
- Put on gumboots, raincoat, umbrella and splash in the puddles after it rains
- Hide a favourite item in the backyard and plan a treasure hunt
- Make a mud pie with old pots and pans
- Use a paintbrush to paint surfaces with water and watch them dry
- Gather up old clothes, shoes, hats and play dress ups
- Use cardboard boxes for marvelous creations with glue and paint
- Make playdough and use household items as tools for creation
- Source easy recipes and make yummy treats
- Make a cubby house with cushions and sheets and watch a favourite movie

Childcare is an unavoidable reality. It's time we stop battling with the guilt and focus our energy on ensuring that the time we do have with our children is well spent. The key is careful planning. Jot down your ideas on a visual calendar and/or family planner and get cracking on some good old regular family fun!

Kat Wieczorek-Ghiso is the co-owner of boutique Early Learning Centres, Paisley Park. A passion for learning led Kat into a career in Early Childhood Education over 20 years ago and it is this passion that has seen Kat go on to successfully complete three degrees and study her PhD. Kat has lectured in the academic space for many years as well as authored many articles in the Early Childhood sector. Follow her on <https://paisleypark.com.au/blog/>

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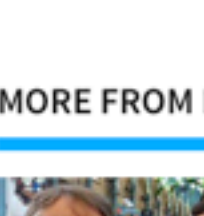
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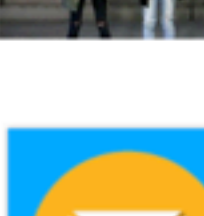
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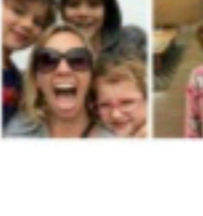


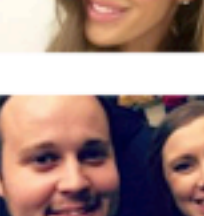
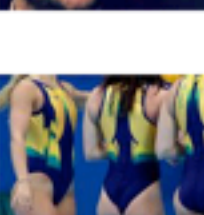


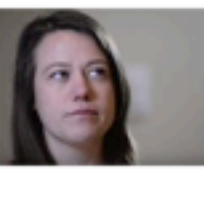
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