

Family



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BUSTED!

When it comes to cutting corners with parental duties, what's OK and what's not?

BY JANENE MASCARELLA

You've traded Butterfingers for good behavior. We all have. But should you feel guilty? We asked the experts and our readers to help us rank the most common parenting shortcuts from "not guilty" to "busted." (See the poll below.)

Skipping pages at bedtime is OK. "It's more important to stick with the ritual of reading than it is to read the book in its entirety," says Deborah Gilboa, M.D., mom of four and founder of AskDoctorG.com.

How about sending a baby-sitter with your child to a birthday party? "Totally fine," says Susan Stiffelman, a family counselor in Los Angeles and author of *Parenting Without Power Struggles*. "This is more about guilt," she explains. "Are you concerned that your child won't have fun without you, or is it more about how you think you're being perceived by other parents?"

The biggest no-no is caving in to their demands. Stiffelman says that if you're on the verge of breaking down, make it *your* idea. ("I was about to give you cookies. You read my mind!")

But Stiffelman adds that "we're all going to cheat now and then, and that's OK," she says. "Feeling guilty, or feeling like a failure, is the worst way to motivate ourselves to try our best."

JILLIAN MICHAELS: GREGG DEGRUBE/AVIRIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES; BINOCULARS: KIM KUHN; LIVING ROOM WITH KIDS AND TV: RENE MANSI/GETTY IMAGES; FRAME: SHUTTERSTOCK; CLOCK: JIRI HERRA/ALAMY

f WHICH ONE OF OUR FAMILY FELONIES IS THE BIGGEST NO-NO?

