

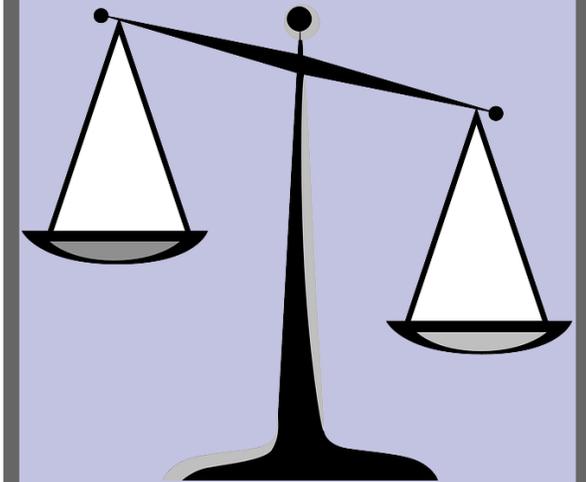
Comparisons are such an easy trap to fall into. Everyday we are in contact with other people. If you are anything like me, your children come up in conversation all the time. We like to check in with each other and brag on our kids! Harmless comments like “Our baby slept through the night at 3 months old!” “Hannah is already potty trained and it only took three days!” “We already have a college fund set up for John!”...who is four by the way. Suddenly these comments aren’t so harmless.

**Now, we are doubting every parental choice we’ve ever made and wondering why our child isn’t like theirs.**

Comparisons are so easy to make. They may even seem harmless. We measure progress in any area of life by checking out how we compare. Of course we don’t really think less of our child just because they aren’t just like our friends children! However, playing the comparison game can be harmful for you and your child.

Source: [ministrytoparents.com](http://ministrytoparents.com)

## Playing the Comparison Game



## The Concern of Comparison

It is natural for us to look for a frame of reference when it comes to raising children. It is such a relief to find parents who are going through the same thing you are. On the flip side, if you find yourself comparing your situation to someone who seems to have it all together, or is doing it better than your family, it can be very discouraging. Playing the comparing game puts pressure on yourself as a parent and on your child to perform for the wrong reasons.

We are encouraged to watch for any problems or delays and to get help if we need it. No wonder we are constantly wondering what is “normal”! The truth is that children develop at different rates. We need to be able to celebrate achievements and milestones, regardless of how and when they may happen. Our kids have different strengths, talents and abilities. As parents it is our job to help them develop what is uniquely theirs. Research shows as long as your child is reaching milestones within a normal range, how quickly they reach them has no real bearing on later skills.

Maybe you also compare yourself to that perfect parent. You know the one...they seem to have it all together while you are barely holding on. It can make you feel defeated and drained. Instead, why not focus on what you do well. We all have things we are good at!

*“For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my  
mother’s womb. I praise you  
because I am fearfully and  
wonderfully made. Your works are  
wonderful, I know that full well.”  
Psalm 139:13-14*

How wonderful it is to know that God purposely created each of us to be unique, and we all know that God doesn’t make mistakes!

Young children believe what they hear. Don’t let your child hear you comparing them. By doing so, you imply that you wish your child was different. Instead we should praise them for what they are doing, regardless of where their skills may fall. Our kids are growing up in a society that tells them who to be and how to act. We want to be able to raise children who are confident in who they are and what they can do. That starts at home by enjoying your children and their abilities.

### Reflect on these Reminders

**1. Remember that milestone development is relative.** Of course you want to make sure that your child’s development is on track, but obsessing over it is not helpful. Don’t let others set the standard for where your child should be. Talk with your child’s pediatrician. If your doctor is comfortable with how your child is growing, you should be too. If you don’t trust your pediatrician, you need to find a new doctor.

**2. Don’t turn parenting into a competition.** Being a parent is hard, even on a good day. Why make it even harder by setting unrealistic expectations on yourself and especially on your child? Every family has their own set of issues that they struggle with every day; some just hide it better than others! You never know what someone else may be dealing with behind closed doors.

**3. Realize that comparisons can steal your joy.** Why purposely invite any sort of conflict into your life? We should be striving to be joyful and to find joy everyday. Comparisons can lead to envy and jealousy. Proverbs 14:30 states, “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.” Find parent friends who are supportive rather than competitive, and be that friend to others.

**4. Be able to admit and own weaknesses, and at the same time recognize and utilize strengths.** What is your child good at? Celebrate that and let him know that you are proud of him. Help him to find activities and projects that interest him and that he enjoys. Your child is a unique individual who has things he is good at. Do you know what they are, or are you too focused on what they cannot do? Apply this to yourself as a parent as well. You may not be the best goodie-baker, but you tell the best stories.