

Summer with the Children
Steve Martinez, LCSW, LSOTP

Now that the Fourth of July has passed, we reached the mid-point of the summer. This may not mean too much to us who go to work daily, but for children and those who watch children during the summer this is very big deal. Though I try to be a good father with great patience and understanding, I know I would eventually lose my mind if I spent the entire summer with my children. I consider myself to be a patient person, but I am just amazed on how much patience is required with children. Sadly, I may not be as patient as I think I am.

My wife was a therapist at a local hospital treating young children who had mental difficulties. When she was pregnant with our twins, she decided to become a teacher to allow her to be at home with the boys during the summer. I thought that was incredible. She was willing to go into a totally new profession for her unborn children. She became a teacher and began to teach middle school math. She went from treating mentally ill 8 year olds to teaching 13 year olds math. Yes, she is a brave woman.

Our twin boys are five and we have a one year old girl now, and my wife has survived all five summers. Of course there have been good days and bad days. There have been days that she has called me and told me to come home from work. Not ask, but told me to leave work. I don't question or complain, I know there are days when she just needs help. Though there are bad days she will always tell me that there are many more good days than bad, and that she doesn't regret being home at all.

My wife is extremely patient, so seeing her go a little nuts helped me to understand that it is ok to get frustrated. When I ask her why she is frustrated with them, she calmly explains that they are kids. That is such a simple comment but it is completely true. They are children. Children will be loud, sometimes they won't listen, they will test limits, they will break rules, and they will break things. No matter how good a parent we think we are, we all get impatient and we all get frustrated with our children. If we can recognize that concept then we can learn to become a little more patient and we can learn to deal with situations better. We must remember that it is ok to be frustrated and impatient, but it is not ok to take our feelings out on our children.

Being a parent is not an easy thing, it has to be the hardest job on earth. To make it easier, we have to remember that children are children. When you feel impatient, when you are angry and frustrated with your children, just tell yourself they are kids and that is what kids do. That little bit of knowledge can go a long way to make your life easier as a parent. To my wife and to the other parents and guardians out there with our children this summer, you are an amazing group and you deserve praise.