

Mumsnet Quiz

Have you ever found yourself worrying that somehow *everybody* else knows how to be a better parent than you, or feeling overwhelmed by the sense you are somehow failing an exam you didn't realise you were sitting, or being certain that even though your one-and-a-half-year-old and is not capable of *saying* therapist, let alone going to see one, you have nonetheless irrevocably damaged them for life because you have GOT IT ALL WRONG?

Well, the time has come for you to take the Mumsnet Rules Quiz, so that you can find out where you sit on the spectrum of parental insanity and generally be reassured that you're actually doing a pretty great job.

Your child demands to have a pet. They will not stop weeping until they are the owner of something even smaller, furrier and smellier than they are. Do you:

- a) Rush to the nearest pet shop to buy an *incredibly cute* lop-eared rabbit, along with £200-worth of rabbit 'necessities', and then spend the next two years on your hands and knees inside the rabbit hutch, cleaning it, feeding it, wiping the muck out of its eyes, before finally acquiescing when you are asked to buy a hamster because 'rabbits are boring'?
- b) Drive out into the countryside, drop them at the top of a country lane and tell them that if they can catch it they can keep it, before going off to the pub for a couple of hours?
- c) Make a pet substitute using an empty tin, sand, duct tape, fun fur and googly eyes, place it in a box with wood shavings, and squeak when children come near the box?
- d) Work out if you have the resources in terms of time, space, money and energy and you yourself are happy to look after it, and if so get a real pet, i.e. a cat or dog, something with which you and your children can have a substantive relationship, one that is like a relationship with a human being but with more slavish adoringness and no personal criticism?

It's the night before World Book Day. You have just found a letter dated ten days ago in the bottom of your child's book bag saying that he or she must dress up as their favourite fictional character when they come into school – tomorrow morning. Do you:

- a) Stay up much of the night fabricating a Hungry Caterpillar costume out of an old sleeping bag and your favourite pair of knickers only to discover that the playground looks like a rerun of the South Park Halloween episode in which Cartman dressed as Hitler and everyone else came as Chewbacca, leaving your Hungry Caterpillar, probably unable to eat, learn or move in the sleeping bag, scarred for life?
- b) Send your child to school with no costume, and brief them to explain that they are going as a character in their own forthcoming autobiography?

- c) Make your child stay up all night ‘revising’ *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, then accompany them to school dressed as Dumbledore/Dolores Umbridge so that you can share in the experience as a family?
- d) Reverse-engineer a costume by choosing something from your dressing-up box and finding a character to match (Dracula, miscellaneous fairytale princess, a knight from some book about knights etc)?

It’s your child’s birthday party and you are faced with the minefield of what food to provide. Gillian McKeith and Marie Antoinette are screaming in your mind’s ear at the same time. Do you:

- a) Lay out a platter of deep-fried battered stuffed-crust crisp-flavoured pizza nuggets, to be washed down with that blue pop which is the same colour as de-icing fluid, possibly condemning your child to tiers of tyres of fat like those stacking ring toys for toddlers?
- b) Ban all unhealthy foods and opt for carrot sticks and rice cakes, turning your child into a six-year-old Woody Allen who enquires anxiously about the fat content of food and asks for salad at their own birthday party?
- c) Make your child prepare all their own birthday snacks while you enjoy a well-earned glass of Pinot Noir – it’s their party so why not let them sort it out?
- d) Let your child and their friends have cake and snacks, but try to enforce a ‘You must have some proper food first’ rule, and go easy on the sweets in the party bags?

Your first-born baby is about to be born and you still haven’t decided on a name. Everyone (and their dog) thinks they should have a say. Do you:

- a) Allow your husband to choose a name (based on his own, his dad’s, his grandmother’s) because he announces that this is traditionally always conferred on male/female infants in his family, and that otherwise his parents will be sad for ever and possibly languish and die?
- b) Keep your chosen name a secret until just after the horrors of childbirth, and then when your baby is handed to you cry (preferably with tears in your eyes) ‘[name of child!]’, as it would be quite a stubborn and mean-spirited partner who then sought to reopen the issue?
- c) Not even pretend to be a mature adult and just go for a name you loved when you were seventeen, e.g. Roxanne, Shyloh, Indie-Mo or Destiny-Mae?
- d) Sit down with your partner, draw up lists from a baby name book, talk and talk until you find something you can both live with, remembering that even if the name you choose is a compromise it will be the name of your child and chances are it will just come to *be* that child and therefore lovely?

Your toddler is causing havoc at playgroup, kicking babies and generally making a nuisance of themselves. Do you:

- a) Sit with a really poor-quality hot brown drink reading *Have a Chat* while your child rampages through the playgroup like Godzilla through a cardboard city?
- b) Gradually ban everything until the children are only allowed to sit in a circle singing 'The Wheels on the Bus', quietly?
- c) Sit at home and wait out the toddler years so that you don't have to lose control of them in public?
- d) Try to implement a two-strikes-and-they-are-out rule, so the first time they batter a baby they get a warning and you discuss it, and the second time you both leave hurriedly?

Your child has successfully brushed their teeth / scribbled a picture of a tree / said thank-you to a stranger. Do you:

- a) Praise them repeatedly and to the skies, putting them at risk of growing up to be one of those TV talent show contestants who are astonished to be told they cannot hold a tune, because no bugger in their family had the decency to tell them any earlier?
- b) Ignore their achievements and put them down in front of other people, e.g. 'Oh but he's a little terror at home / wets the bed / has smelly feet etc etc.'?
- c) Get competitive with your child and show them you can do it better?
- d) Praise them for a job well done without going overboard, with a healthy sprinkling of constructive criticism where required?

Your child comes home with an imaginary friend called Tinkerbell. Do you:

- a) Set a place at breakfast for Tinkerbell, give her a bowl of cereal and a slice of toast, swing her on swings, have a bed made up for her, and remember to never leave her on the bus?
- b) Lose your temper with Tinkerbell when 'she' takes the scissors to your favourite pair of trousers and flush her down the toilet?
- c) Fall in love with Tinkerbell and the power of your child's vivid imagination, indulging in the parental fantasy that they are a Brontë (in the sense of being tremendously creative rather than likely to die of TB)?
- d) Treat Tinkerbell as a normal part of your child's life, because she may be a useful outlet for feelings which they might not be able to express, but make sure that the disciplinary arrangements for Tinkerbell are the same as those for your real-life child?

Despite your gender-unbiased, modern parenting approach, your small daughter wants to wear make-up and refuses to change out of her Princess Tiana costume. Do you:

- a) Celebrate the array of sexy fashion items available to the under-fives, e.g. T-shirts emblazoned with 'Future WAG', padded bras, leather hot pants and fishnets, and actively encourage your child to experiment?
- b) Scream 'GET THAT MUCK OFF YOUR FACE YOU ARE NOT LEAVING THE

- HOUSE LIKE THAT!', throw away all the make-up and lock your child in her room?
- c) Drum into your daughter the harsh realities behind the storybook princesses she wants to emulate (Snow White: cleans for a load of men before being killed by her stepmother for being too pretty; Sleeping Beauty: told she'll die at sixteen but falls asleep for one hundred years instead; Beauty and the Beast: defined by her looks, trapped by a beast and forced to do housework; Rapunzel: locked in a tower because her stupid father promised a witch his firstborn in return for a cabbage; Cinderella: a beautiful girl forced to do housework for her two ugly and therefore evil sisters)?
 - d) Recognise that experimentation with one's appearance is, if kept in proportion, a harmless part of growing up, but make sure your child has some clothes she can run around and climb in too?

Which of these names for a female child's bits do you find the most offensive?

- a) Vulva
- b) Twinkle
- c) Noo-noo
- d) Front-bottom

Mostly a):

You might be mistaken for a doormat.

Mostly b):

You might be mistaken for Pol Pot.

Mostly c):

You might be mistaken for Lady Gaga.

Mostly d):

You might be mistaken some of the time, but give yourself a pat on the back! You're doing a good-enough job to keep them out of therapy... for the next few years, at least.

The Mumsnet Rules: A VICTORY FOR COMMON SENSE