

# PRAEDITUS

*Latin praeditus adj. 1 cl. meaning gifted*

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## Making Decisions Based on Values

Non-negotiables are a values-based approach to structuring our lives. Most of us have core values but rarely think to translate them into our everyday routines. The disruption in our plans this year gives us space to reflect and create a schedule grounded by our ideals.

While values are often broad terms, such as security, education, loyalty, and connections, a non-negotiable is a concrete activity that exemplifies a value. For the nature-lover who was too busy, now might be the time to implement a 30-minute walk as a non-negotiable.

How do you implement a family structure around non-negotiables?

1. Identify your core values.
2. Next, come together as a family and name five of your values. If all family members share a value, it could be the basis for a family-shared non-negotiable. Individual values are perfectly okay. You can start with one non-negotiable activity or goal for each value.
3. Create a list of activities that fall under your values. These will become your non-negotiables.
4. Document and post your non-negotiables. Next, schedule these into a shared calendar. Plan your family's month with these activities as the core of your routine.
5. Check back in six to eight weeks to see how these non-negotiables are working themselves into your new life rhythm.



## Grandparents Fill Important Roles

If your family is fortunate enough to have strong connections with grandparents, you have a great resource to help guide and support your gifted child. Grandparents serve as a bridge between the past and the future and provide important perspectives through their life experiences and long-term involvement with the family. They may assume various roles including role model, magician, mentor, historian, or listener.

Several ways grandparents may connect with gifted children:

- Share specific personal expertise or skills
- Share personal talents, especially practical life skills like cooking
- Widen horizons with trips to a local museum or nature walks
- Work together on service projects to model caring for others
- Make events of the past come alive by sharing family lore
- Share family recipes and cook together
- Share a passion like gardening, caring for pets, or collecting

Even those who grandparent from a distance can make connections:

- Carve out 1:1 time with each grandchild online or via phone call
- Send snail mail—kids love grandparent letters/cards/notes
- Read together virtually or record reading books and share
- Play postcard or online chess or share virtual games
- Share recollections of historical events
- Share your collections—baseball cards, stamps, or spoons
- Provide opportunities for grandkids to discuss current events, school projects, or social-emotional concerns
- Learn something new and challenging together

Grandparents can fill many needs in the lives of kids... invite their help.



## Mastering Time

Time management is a skill we all need to master. There's no option to add time to the clock so we have to make do with what we are given.

### Time based versus Event based

There are two ways to schedule. Time based structuring makes sense when we have to coordinate the activities of a large number of people or when we need to fit into certain external constraints (business operating hours). Much of schoolwork and extracurricular activities are done outside of that structured setting. Some activities are also hard to schedule precisely: will the math assignment take 30 minutes or 90?

Event based schedules largely ignore the specific durations or start/stop times and focus on sequencing events. Math then snack then essay then dinner then... You can't totally ignore time. The trick is to structure events so that they sequence within the time available.

### Visual Schedules

Create a visual representation of your schedule. Create both the schedule you think you have and then, over a couple of weeks, record the schedule you really have. Compare the real schedule and the believed schedule. Do they match? Where is your time really going? Adjust as necessary to fit with your needs.

### Routines

Build short routines to make transitions easier and also to make it easier to accomplish regular tasks without having to think about it and if a routine becomes oppressive, change it.

Having a schedule that works for your family will leave you feeling upbeat and energized.

Adapted from: Stephen R. Balzac of *7 Steps Ahead*

## Are You on the Crazy Train?

Millions of children across America feel overwhelmed because they are involved in too many activities. Alvin Rosenfeld, M.D., a child psychiatrist and author of *The Over-Scheduled Child: Avoiding the Hyper-Parenting Trap* explains, "Overscheduling our children is not only a widespread phenomenon, it's how we parent today," he says. "Parents feel remiss that they're not being good parents if their kids aren't in all kinds of activities."

These children are prone to stress and they often miss out on important childhood experiences. They may miss playing with his friends in the neighborhood. They want to ride bikes, have water-balloon fights and build forts out of cardboard boxes. Additionally, while there are so many wonderful opportunities for children today, they need time to explore things in depth. When they are involved in too many different things, they sacrifice breadth for depth. Taken to an extreme, overbooked children may develop stress disorders.

Honestly, most parents have good intentions. They enroll their children in activities because they want them to have a rich, happy childhood. They want children to experience all the world has to offer. The last thing they would want is for their kids to feel stressed.

Think about this: to meet the schedule that is filled with activities, your family might be missing out on some really important opportunities.

- Unstructured play which allows children to pursue their interests, express their personalities and learn how to structure their time.
- Downtime with parents -- time to relax, talk, read, play games and just hang out, that helps build strong family relationships.
- Time with extended-family that gives children a valuable network of social support.
- Reading, writing, thinking, dreaming, building, creating and fantasizing that helps kids develop self-awareness.

### What Can Parents Do?

Child experts acknowledge that extracurricular activities can be a positive force in children's lives, but they also agree that overscheduling can put children at risk. Balance is key. Extracurricular activities should be fun and enhance family life, not drain it. For most families, simply limiting the amount of time spent in extracurricular activities may be all that's needed to eliminate a child's stress and put family life back in balance.

"Parents need to relax. Slow down. Activities are fine, but don't go over the top. Research says that what children need most are relationships, not activities," says Rosenfeld. "Focus on building meaningful relationships with your children, not becoming their chauffeur."

**We love suggestions for articles! Is there a question you have about gifted kids? Please send requests for articles to [Praeditus Feedback](#)**