Parents of Special Needs Kids Require Time for Self-Care

Parents of special needs children are often burning the candle at both ends. They’re continually striving to create an enriching and supportive environment at home while simultaneously managing other responsibilities, along with work. Personal care is absolutely essential to ensuring not only your own overall health and well-being but your effectiveness as a parent to a child with special needs. [Spark 2 Hope](https://www.spark2hope.org/) can help - the organization strives to create possibilities and inspire people to achieve their life goals.

Parental Fatigue

What’s parental fatigue? According to Choosing Therapy, parental fatigue is a [real thing](https://www.choosingtherapy.com/parental-burnout/) - a term used to describe how overworked, overstressed parents can become mentally, emotionally, and physically run down due in large part to their caregiving schedule. A self-care treatment plan can work wonders. It allows you to prioritize yourself in key areas, ask for help when needed, and find creative ways to care for yourself while caring for others. The first step is identifying your core fatigue causes and finding ways to alleviate them.

Assess Your Levels

There are a lot of different ways you can assess the degree of fatigue you’re suffering. For example, are you feeling like an effective parent? Are you sleeping [well](https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-hygiene/how-to-determine-poor-quality-sleep), or do you experience [symptoms](https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/depression/symptoms) of depression or anxiety? How is your child's behavior? Are childcare duties impacting your marital satisfaction? There are a lot of different ways that fatigue manifests, and identifying these areas can help you devise a workable plan of action. A spouse or co-parent may also be facing this same dilemma, so strive to work in tandem as a way to support one another while also reaching out for external help as necessary.

Best Self-Care Practices

One of the best ways to approach healthy self-care is to build time into your schedule where you focus just on yourself. This might mean a regular exercise regime, meal prep on the weekends that allows you to have [more time](https://www.foodnetwork.com/healthyeats/healthy-tips/2019/10/meal-prep-tips-hacks-experts) during the week, and making sure that you get enough quality sleep. Use outside resources as necessary. For example, a grocery delivery service, housekeeping or lawn care services, or even trading off with other parents in terms of transportation kids to and from activities can all build in extra time and help reduce your stress levels. Make time for meditation at least once a day to [center yourself](https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/types-of-meditation) so you’re calm and well-focused.

Pursue Personal Goals

Parental fatigue can begin to emerge when you're focused 100 percent on your kids and allow your own personal ambitions to fall by the wayside. If you've ever wanted to go back to school or start your own business, or even begin a new hobby, it's an important part of your self-care agenda. For example, if you want to launch a startup, there are many benefits to forming an LLC, or limited liability company. These include tax advantages, less paperwork, and increased flexibility. You can hire an attorney to file the paperwork, do it yourself, or use a formation company. There are different [state regulations](https://www.zenbusiness.com/minnesota-llc/) around LLC formation, so you’ll want to learn about yours in advance.

Avoid Overcompensation

Sometimes, when we get started on a path toward self-care, there's a tendency to overcompensate in a way that could have negative outcomes. For example, if you're trying to carry the full load to free up time for a partner while ignoring your own needs, it could have poor outcomes. Likewise, while it's important to [reach out](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/tracking-wonder/202002/4-tips-effectively-ask-help-and-get-yes) to resources and external support services, you don't want to get into a habit of asking others for so much that you end up harming your social networks. While time for self-care is important, if you drop the ball on other areas of responsibility it could create new problems, so strive for a healthy balance in all that you do.

Caring for a child with special needs can be both rewarding and mentally, physically, and emotionally taxing. Create a dynamic in which caring for your kids starts with caring for yourself.

Spark 2 Hope provides a secure setting inclusive to children and adolescents of all abilities, allowing them to engage and grow socially, emotionally, and physically while making lifelong connections. Learn more by visiting the site or [reaching out](https://www.spark2hope.org/reach-out) for additional information.

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