

Do you ever wonder if you are doing enough, or if you're a good mother – or are your children happy? Advocate Veerash Srikison looks at circumstances that may cause you to evaluate your method of motherhood.

THE GOOD-ENOUGH MOTHER

Research shows that caring for your child is based on your own circumstances, their needs, and your ability to evolve into motherhood. So many mothers (in this case, any woman who cares for a child and conducts the act of 'mothering'), face the anxiety and worry that they may not be making the right decisions for the child(ren) in their care. Society places too much emphasis on judging mothers on whether or not the job they are doing in caring for their child is the right way based on someone else's opinion. This factor of outside influence only raises the countless moments mothers have where they feel inadequate, pressured to appear perfect, and to think they always need to be following the crowd to be seen as keeping up.

HOW TO DETERMINE CHILD CARE

The law contained in the Children's Act 38 of 2005, has been kind enough to offer guidance in terms of caring for a child and divides care into basic requirements that all parents/care-givers (anyone who factually cares for a child) should ensure they are fulfilling. Here are a few excerpts from the Act where it defines 'care in relation to a child', which includes:

1. Providing a child with a suitable place to live, with living conditions that are conducive to the child's health, well-being and development and the necessary financial support. This provision does not say, you need a seven-bedroom home, with the latest technology and air conditioning throughout the summer season. So if you are able to provide a suitable place for your child to live that encourages a healthy development and within your financial means, you are already on a great start to ticking off a basic requirement.

2. Protecting your child from maltreatment, abuse, neglect, degradation, discrimination, exploitation and any other

physical, emotional or moral harm or hazards. Remember that feeding your child cereal for dinner two days in a row does not raise an alarm for any of the concerns in this category. It does give you the go ahead though to get involved in your child's life to ensure that no person takes advantage of them, even if it means you being labelled as a 'helicopter mum'. This category is what gives mothers many sleepless nights because protecting your child is your instinct and belief that keeps you sacrificing so much of yourself.

3. Guiding, directing and securing your child's education and upbringing appropriate to your child's age, maturity and stage of development. No harm is done when you insist homework is completed, assessments are studied for and that manners are adhered to at all times; in your defence, it's because the law said so.

4. Guiding, advising and assisting your child in decisions to be taken by your child in a manner appropriate to their age, maturity and stage of development. When you stop what you are doing, regardless of its importance, to assess life and its complications with your child and hold their hand with the utmost patience of understanding, you are indeed a good-enough mother. These moments of tender care will be captured in the memories of your child and, as they grow older and your guidance becomes so important to them, their cup of gratitude will overflow.

To you, the mother who protects and nurtures the future, with all else that you have to endure, you have my deepest respect and admiration because you are doing the most significant deed possible with your life. Your circumstances do not matter; if the law believes you are 'maintaining a sound relationship' with your child, you are indeed doing more than enough. The answer to your questions above is yes! Happy Mother's Day this month, and every day of your years to come. 