

Parenting Discussion Questions

This is by no means a complete list. There are some blank lines for you to add your own questions to the discussions you have with your partner. Let us know what helped you so we can refine our list for future students and readers!

What are some pregnancy/birth/parenting decisions that you want to make, that you suspect your family/friends will disagree with? How will you be a united front?

How is your relationship with your parents? How do you want to incorporate your child into your family, and your partner's family?

How did your parents handle conflict between them? How do you think you want to handle it when it happens in front of your child(ren)?

Were you spanked as a child? How do you feel about it? What do you think you want to do with your child(ren)?

Were you tickled as a child? How do you feel about it? What do you think you want to do with your child(ren)?

Were you abused as a child? Have you dealt with it? Do you have a sequence in place to help you if you or your partner sees your "triggers" being set off?

How do you feel about yelling? If it is not okay, how will you want to handle it if you do yell?

How do you want to set boundaries for your child(ren)? What have you seen family/friends do to discipline their children? Did it work? What do you want to try for your family?

How do you feel about the value of your word? If you say you will do something with your child, life happens, and you can't follow through – how do you think you will handle it?

What is your favorite family tradition from your childhood? Do you want to incorporate it into your new family? If so, how?

Do your faith traditions match? If so, what values do you have about practicing your faith? If they don't, what/how will you teach your children? How will you manage any conflicts if your opinion changes down the line?

What is your vision for your family? When you put on your magic glasses and envision your child on the day (s)he leaves to live on their own, how will they be equipped?

What does your "perfect" day look like? Can you try to work at least one of those days into every month?

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Parenting Discussion Questions

As your children get into pre-school and beyond:

What kind of value do you place on education? Are grades and tests the measure for success, or do you have other ways to evaluate how well your child is learning and performing in school?

How will you decide where your child will go to school? Do you want to explore homeschooling, charter schools, private schools, or anything else outside of the sphere of traditional public education?

Do you have any favorite sports and/or activities from your childhood that you want to share with your children? What if your favorite doesn't become their favorite?

Do you have any kind of expectation for them to study music or art, or other artistic endeavors? How and when will you know that they are ready?

How about the time dedicated to extra-curricular activities – how much do you think you want to be driving around; how much is too much?

What will you do about an allowance – do you give it or does it have to be earned?

What will you do about screen time with electronic devices – is there a set time allotted per day, or is it self-monitored by the child?

Do you have any expectations about a certain amount of books being read per week/month?

How will you get to know your child's friends and their families? Will you have particular expectations about the type of people they interact with?

Do you have beliefs around how your child is dressed, piercings, or tattoos? How will you talk to them about it, and what do you think you want to say?

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As you are talking out these answers with your partner, you may come to the realization that your answers/decisions will raise questions from your family and friends. It may help you to role-play with each other, and practice those interactions before you have them. It may help you feel more confident knowing that you can explain your position if need be.

If people take offense on account of your decisions, it is helpful to remember is that their reaction is a reflection on them, and their own hang-ups or insecurities. If they feel like they failed or fell short in a particular area, they may not want to support you because then you would be "better" or it emphasizes their perceived failure. Helpful phrases in that situation:

- I can tell that you care, and that means a lot to me. If my plans don't work out, I will certainly take your point of view into consideration.
- I am sorry that did not work out for you. What would you do differently if you had to do it over again?
- I am sorry that did not work out for you. What did you learn from that situation?
- I hear what you are saying, and I can appreciate your point of view. For now, this is the decision we are making for our family. We are not asking anyone else to make it with us.