

Welcome to voiceBoks

the voice of parenthood



MENU



Now I'm A Parent Of School-Age Children, How Has My Life Changed?

January 6, 2014 By [Nicola Young](#) — 89 Comments

As we near the end of 2013, I have been reflecting on the changes that have occurred over the past year. In September, my youngest child started school and I didn't anticipate how much this one little change to our daily routine would affect us all. It signaled a new phase in our lives, both in terms of the children's development and our parenting.



When you have a child, you quickly realise that your life will not be your own anymore. You give yourself over to this tiny being, as a primal instinct takes over and kick starts a need to protect and nurture your offspring. Your life becomes a blur of changing nappies, feeding, nursing and nap times, in a never ending cycle. You resign yourself to the fact that your hair will have to stay in a permanent ponytail because you don't have time to do anything else with it, plus if you leave it down you run the risk of it either being pulled (really hard) or ending up covered in vomit. Showers are a two minute splash-down and make up is minimal; if you ever get the chance to go out, 'getting ready'

doesn't even come in to it. Your hands are permanently cracked and dried because you have to wash them so much and your eyes have suitcase-sized bags under them from all the sleepless nights. It's physically exhausting.

But you get through it because you know that you have no choice. Your children rely on you

and you accept that. You selflessly get on with the job in hand. But flash forward to stage two, which is where I am right now and it's a different story. Gone are the days of nappy changing and routines. The children don't wake up in the night anymore and in the morning they go downstairs and make themselves some breakfast. They can even put the television on, take themselves to the toilet and get themselves dressed. It's a miracle! All the training has finally paid off!

On reaching this phase, I dared to have selfish thoughts again. I can read a book whenever I want to and I can finish it whilst I still remember the plot. I can drink a cup of tea while it's still warm AND I can have a manicure if I want to. I can leisurely take my time to get ready if I am going out, plus (and here's the bonus) I can have a lie in the day after. So much has changed in my life and after ten years of bringing up young children it seems as though I have finally reached the light at the end of the tunnel.

But there are some things I hadn't anticipated. Whereas the early years of child care were so physically exhausting, I hadn't banked on how emotionally draining this next stage would be. Here are three very individual personalities, who all expect me to devote 100% of my attention to them whenever they need me. And as they are growing up, their emotional needs are growing by the day. I have a ten year old daughter, who is a hormonal ticking time bomb just waiting to explode. Her daily traumas centre on her appearance and her relationship with her friends. At the other end of the spectrum is my five year old son, who needs to know everything. His questions are endless and I can't answer most of them because half the time they don't even make sense:

'Why don't you know everything, mum,' he will say.

'Because I just... don't.'

See, I can't even answer that one. Then, somewhere in between, is my seven year old daughter, also prone to asking a lot of questions, but also likely to cry at the drop of a hat; emotional and inquisitive all in one.

The walk home from school has become a significant part of our day and one that I dread. After not seeing me all day, each child enters into a contest to see who can get the most attention, each feeling that he or she has something more significant or urgent to say than the others. My eldest daughter usually has a crisis to talk through, concerning her friends. But whilst attempting to tell me, she will inevitably be interrupted by her brother, who has been building up a barrage of questions the whole day. Big sister will then snap at him for interrupting her and an argument will ensue, which usually results in her storming off in a huff because I am not listening to her anymore.

When I reprimand my son for interrupting he usually over reacts (as a five year old is prone to do) by crying and protesting his innocence. This results in my middle daughter crying too, as she hates to see her brother upset:

'Look what you've done, you've made him cry. You're so mean,' she will say, through her tears.

I should add here that it takes ten minutes for us to walk home from school, and in that time I somehow manage to upset all three of my children. This happens on a daily basis and I'm not entirely sure how.

What needs to change? Well lots of things actually. Firstly, the children need to realise that there are three of them and only one of me. And I need to establish some rules or routine to try and give them equal amounts of my time. I had perhaps let too many selfish thoughts enter my head when my youngest started school. Maybe I got carried away thinking about all the time I would have to do things for myself once again. I don't want to lose that though, not now I've got it back after so long. But I am going to have to make some room in my emotional head space for all of us. Basically that means splitting myself four ways and I'm not exactly sure how I am going to do that.

Any ideas?

You may also like -

- [What it Takes to Be a Mom, Entrepreneur, and Blogger](#)
- [How to Not Lose Yourself in Your Role as a Working Parent](#)
- [Are You a Parent Who Likes to Compare Your Kid\(s\) with Others?](#)
- [8 Great Ways for Parents to Help Children Build a Positive Self-Image](#)



Nicola Young

Nicola Young is a freelance copywriter, with experience in all aspects of commercial writing, including articles, newsletters, press releases and web content. She also writes young adult and children's fiction and regularly blogs about her own family life.

[More Posts](#) - [Website](#)

◦ **Share Post**

◦ [Twitter](#) 54

◦ [Facebook](#) 12

◦ [Google +1](#) 1

◦ [Email](#)

Comments



Trice says

January 9, 2014 at 11:00 am

Once i had my own I called home apologized of all the crazy stuff I did as a child.

[Reply](#)



Nicola Young says

January 9, 2014 at 12:02 pm

So true, but we have to wait so long for the same apology to come from our own children!

[Reply](#)