**A letter to competitive parents everywhere**

Katie has encountered competitive moms and dads too many times over the past couple of months and she’s not a fan

Mar 6, 2012 Katie Dupuis   [**2**](http://www.todaysparent.com/blogs/type-a-baby/a-letter-to-competitive-parents-everywhere/)

Dear competitive parents,

I’m going to try to say this without judgment, without the same sort of disdain I feel from you. I don’t want this letter to get your back up, or, even worse, to give you fodder to further judge the way I’m raising my child (so far — c’mon, she’s three months old). Just do me a favour and read to the end, so you at least hear what I’m trying to say, in the gentlest way I know how, even if you don’t agree.

We are blessed with funny, beautiful, crazy, infuriating, hilarious children. Whether they came to us biologically or through foster care or adoption, whether they are teeny tiny or teenagers, we are so lucky to have them in our lives, and of course we want the very best for them. We want them to succeed in every way possible — in their work, in their relationships, in their sense of self worth. We want them to make the most of their place in the world. I think all parents feel this — love makes it that way.

But the path for each child, for each parent, is different, and I feel like I need to climb up on my rookie mama soapbox to say so.

My daughter has been here for 15 weeks — basically a blink of the eye to the world outside of our little family — and you’d think she should be reciting *The Raven* for all of the questions we get from other parents. While we’re here, let me sum it up for you: We read books in funny voices, we show her pictures of animals, we name the body parts for her and we do tummy time every day. She’s not rolling over yet, she’s just started to laugh out loud, she’s getting to be a better sleeper with every week that passes, she does take a soother, she eats like a champ and she’s gaining weight just fine. I’d say thanks for asking, but I don’t mean it, because my daughter is my concern, not yours. It’s one thing if you want to have a conversation, if you have a worry about your own child and you want to know what’s happening with Soph to get a sense of your own situation, but it’s entirely another if you’re just being nosy. Or, worse yet, if you’re comparing.

To future parents of Sophie’s friends, to future PTA members, to future summer camp and swimming lesson moms and dads, I will make you a promise here and now: I will try to see your children for the unique little beings they are, rather than mentally measuring up them against Sophie. But I will also seem disinterested if you want to know if Sophie is toilet-trained, if you ask me about her eating habits, if you want to know how her grades are or if she got into university (clearly this promise extends until my baby is no longer a baby). I won’t worry if she’s not the best on the team or isn’t in the gifted program or doesn’t have a discerning palette, and you shouldn’t either.  As long as she’s healthy and happy, as long as she realizes her potential and makes an effort to reach it, and as long as she makes a positive contribution to the world in whatever big or small way she chooses, I don’t care if she’s an Olympian or a librarian. Both are good, valid choices and one is not better than the other.

Further to that, I won’t sign her up for every program and class there is. I want her to be a kid. I’ll be sure to expose her to many things, don’t you worry, but I think she should also play outside, blow bubbles, draw on the sidewalk (and I don’t mean that she should replicate Monet’s “Water Lilies”). And if you happen to run into us in our pajamas at the movies, don’t be so smug — I’m just trying to give her memories of Mommy being silly, of special afternoons together, for when I’m on her case in years to come about the C she got in Physics or about practicing piano.

Please don’t take this the wrong way. I will push Sophie when she needs to be pushed, but I won’t worry about how you are pushing your children. Friends, I will welcome conversations about the merits of learning an instrument or a new language, and I will be proud for you when your child gets the lead in the school musical, but I just won’t play the “Well, my child is…” game. All that matters is that my child is so special. And so is yours. Let’s remember that.

Sincerely,
Katie