

Parents Take Five for Safety

A Guide To Making the Decisions for School and Care

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“Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of our children.” Charles Swindoll

One of the biggest decisions we have to make during our lives is whether or not we will become parents. For some, this was a no-brainer - What do you want to be when you grow up? A mommy, or a daddy!

When we had children, did we ever anticipate that we would be bringing children into a COVID world and needing to protect them not only from predators, allergens, childhood illnesses, but also pandemics?

Today, desperate parents are trying to make the decision as how best to educate their children in a COVID world? Everyone has an opinion as to what is best for your child. Even your child has an opinion.

The options most parents are faced with are, sending their children back to daycare and school, school by internet at home or at a caregivers, learning pods, or home schooling.

The tension of making this major decision is causing parents everywhere to panic.

Arguments fill the room and phone lines with tension.

Our emotional and mental states are in the danger zone.

Your children are bored.

The virus still is waiting to find another victim.

The clock is ticking down.

Your employers are growing impatient for you to either return to work or to be less distracted.

Child abuse is on the rise.

OK – time out! Take 5. Breathe breathe deeply.

Look over at your child and let the love you have for this precious being capture your thoughts for just a moment. Remind yourself that the journey to making a decision is as important if not more so than the decision itself.

Over the course of the next 72 hours ask yourself the following questions. I suggest you write down the answers – journal, meditate or pray, seeking for inner peace.

- 1) Who is responsible for making this decision – list the decision makers?
- 2) What are our key values and priorities?
- 3) What are our options – list them?
- 4) What is in the best interest of my child(ren)?
- 5) What are the strengths of each option?

- 6) What are the weaknesses of each option?
- 7) What opportunities will this provide?
- 8) What risks are associated with each option?
- 9) Who are the stakeholders?
- 10) What special needs does my child(ren) have?
- 11) Can I afford financially to stay at home with my child(ren)?
- 12) If I do stay at home can I provide uninterrupted focus and attention to my child(ren)?
- 13) Am I being required to return to the workplace or required to provide undistracted attention to my work?
- 14) What safety precautions are the government and the schools putting in place?
- 15) How well do I know the team members that will be caring for my child(ren)?
- 16) Is the location I am sending my child(ren) to governed and licensed?
- 17) Is there a health and safety officer in place?
- 18) Would the pod that I am placing my child(ren) in include childcare professionals?
- 19) Are the childcare overseers screened and trained in abuse prevention and the safety of children?
- 20) What type of supervision and oversight will be in place?
- 21) Have we done a sight visit to the location?
- 22) Is their insurance in place?
- 23) How will this help with my child(ren)'s emotional and physical health and well-being?
- 24) How will this help us as parents and guardians with our emotional and physical health and well-being?

Now go back ... together read through your notes.

The answer will be there.

You will know what to do.

- 25) Do we have a peace about the decision we are making? If not, don't make a hasty decision. Buy some time Take vacation time, change your environment, your scenery.

Once you have made your decision, go forth and live out your conviction.

Knowing that what you are doing is the right decision for you and your child.

I'd love to read your answers. Drop me a note at mbissell@plantoprotect.com.

Melodie Bissell is the President of Plan to Protect®, a Canadian based consulting and training company providing the highest standard of abuse prevention and protection of the vulnerable sector. Melodie is an author of many bestselling books and published articles, is an inspiring speaker, blogger and has just launched a podcast which is marketed as the Safest Podcast on the Internet. Melodie and her team serve 10,000 organizations in North America coaching and training them on best practices on safety. Without hesitation Melodie believes her greatest claim to fame is being a parent to five amazing children, three by birth and two by marriage. In October 2020 she will welcome her first grandbaby into our world!