

A World of Choices--WUIS

I recently read this bumper sticker: “If you don’t have an agenda for your kids’ lives, don’t worry: the world does.” It struck me how casually many parents consider their opportunity as they raise their children. Sometimes, parents just don’t know their own **power**.

Families convey the value system they embrace. Children grow up loving music, appreciating nature, valuing diverse cultures, or respecting their elders as these values and others are played out in daily exchanges in their homes.

The world is full of things that we love and that we abhor. The great news for parents is this: **You** get to choose! Parents have an opportunity to introduce their children to the world. You can choose to surround your child with the influences you want.

Parents make hundreds of decisions every day about their children, whether they realize it or not. Choosing when to **affirm** a child or when to **challenge** him, which battles to **fight** and which ones to **laugh off**, how much television to allow, when to **engage** and when to **give children space**—these choices and others fill every day.

No parent makes the “**right**” decisions all the time. Sometimes the “right” decision is pretty elusive. Every parent is an **amateur**, considering the fact that we never raise the same child twice. But children who know they are loved have a great resilience, and seem to grow up pretty well.

(PAUSE) Parents bear a heavy responsibility, but they do have two powerful resources to help them with their job. First, and most importantly: most parents **really do** want what is best for their children. While other issues sometimes get in the way, it’s my experience that most parents’ deepest desires are related to a good life for their children.

(PAUSE) Another great resource is the **expertise** parents have about their own kids from living with them every day. Parents use this

knowledge (often without even realizing it) to make good choices for their families.

Respecting parents' expertise should prevent others from giving too much advice. Grandparents, doctors, teachers, religious leaders—many families are surrounded by a great resource system for raising their children. But ultimately, **parents** are accountable.

“Let’s TALK Kids” honors the expertise and authority of parents. Instead of giving advice and prescribing a solution, I hope we’ll thoughtfully examine issues facing families.

Because in a world full of choices, your child can count on **you** for the answers.

This is Claudia Quigg with Let’s TALK Kids.