

4 Ways to Cope with Feeling 'Touched Out'

Being "touched out" is something many parents of young kids know intimately. Here's how to cope when you just need a break from physical contact.

Try to explain to someone that you're feeling physically uncomfortable with your children being so close to you 24/7 and you might just face some judgment: How could you not want those little hands in yours? Or that little body pressed close to you at all times, even when you're trying to sleep?

The truth is, maybe I will miss looking down at my feet and seeing bruises from the kids literally walking *on* my feet because being next to me isn't enough. But honestly, right now, I just want one full day when no one touches me—not my kids, not my partner. No one.

What It Means to Feel 'Touched Out'

Clearly, I'm feeling "touched out." Being touched out is when a parent is constantly physically touched or needed by their children, significant other, and even the family dog for physical comfort throughout the day and becomes irritable as a result of missing out on their bodily autonomy. Some may [compare it to parenting burnout](#), but feeling touched out can go beyond parenting to affect the relationship between partners.

Some parents may even feel that they don't want to hug, kiss, or be intimate in any way with their partner after a full day of being clung to by their kids. They physically cringe at the idea of being touched even one more time during the day. The reasons that this occurs might vary slightly, but it could relate to the results of a [2018 survey](#) that found parents only have 32 minutes to themselves a day.

After reviewing this topic with Mary Kay Fleming, Ph.D., a former professor specializing in human development, early childhood, and parenting at Mount St. Joseph University in Ohio, more possibilities emerged. Dr. Fleming pointed out that in past generations women specifically were socialized into the full-time motherhood role; they were not expected to be full-time parents *and* also be full-time professionals. Nor were their partners. But today, parents (especially moms) often "do it all."

She also pinpointed that the technological advancements meant to make our life easier have actually made us feel like we are on call 24/7. In short, some of the pressure being felt by parents that are touched out could be a culmination of *all* the demands, not just the direct physical demands of a child. A physical roadblock is the easiest to see and address, therefore it becomes the thing we feel and struggle against.



How to Cope With Feeling 'Touched Out'

So, what can be done about this? Luckily, Dr. Fleming offered some advice.

1. Take a break

"Taking a break can be the absolute best treatment in certain situations," says Dr. Fleming. "Parents need time to themselves and time away to refresh, refocus, and replenish that deep reservoir needed to nurture." Of course, this can be difficult to practice in reality, especially if your child is very young. (Babies don't exactly understand the need for their parent to take a break when they're hungry, am I right?) Instead, if you can, ask for help or schedule a true break time in your calendar so you can stick to it. If someone else is there to care for the baby, that is the best way to get a moment to yourself.

2. Communicate

If you're feeling touched out, don't be afraid to let your other household members know. There is no shame in it, and the sooner your kids and partner learn about your needs, the better. Have a conversation with your partner about how you're feeling and make a plan to help you. "The adults need to communicate with one another about their needs and expectations, for one another and for their children, and get on the same page. That's the real key to happiness," explains Dr. Fleming. "Two parents in the same home are part of a collective endeavor—the most important one of their lives—they are building something special together. If they don't support each other, the kids will pay the price." This involves the boundaries set for the children and the time spent together. All things can be talked out.

3. Direct the touching

Instead of touching solely focused on caregiving for others, add in touching that is beneficial to your well-being. For instance, consider getting a massage or a pedicure. Carolyn Wagner, a Chicago-area therapist at the [Wilmette Counseling Center](#) specializing in maternal mental health, says, "Doing something that is focused solely on taking care of yourself, and including touch as a main component, is a great way to remind yourself and your body that being close and connected to others can be fulfilling and positive."

4. Ditch unrealistic expectations

"Another enemy is unrealistic expectations," says Dr. Fleming. "If we expect ourselves to give 100% all the time—with anything less perceived as failure—we're doomed before we begin. No one can meet those expectations." Be kind to yourself while you walk through the different milestones and needs of your child. You will have bad days, and you will have good days. Remember that and keep your internal dialogue similar to what you would say to a struggling friend. If you're feeling touched out today, that's OK! Acknowledge it, accept it, make a plan to get a break if you can, and remember that tomorrow will be a whole new day.

This article is by Mandy Waysman. For more resources like this, visit <https://www.parents.com/>.

Preschool Family Night at the Turf

There will be two turf events in February: 2/10/23 and 2/24/23 from 5-6:30 pm. The event is Free, open to families with children ages 0-5, and located at the Dimond Park Field House, 2961 Riverside Drive. This opportunity is made possible in part through support from thread and through the City and Borough of Juneau Youth Activities grant that is funded with public dollars. Thank you thread! Thank you CBJ!



Please Join the Child Care Coalition of Alaska!

YOU can help advocate for equitable funding increases for child care workers an keep child care spots available to families. Visit the [website](#) to learn more about the coalition and its [mission](#), and look for the "Join Us!" link at the bottom of the homepage to stay connected with updates and virtual meetings to be held in the near future.

This coalition aims to assure that those who are directly impacted by the child care system have a voice at the table.



Crafts with Kids

Valentine's Conversation Heart Squish Bag Science Activity

Materials

- Quart or gallon sized freezer bag
- Clear packing tape
- Clear hair gel
- Bag of conversation hearts (optional foam candy hearts)
- Permanent marker (optional)



Process

1. Draw a heart shape onto the bag with a permanent marker.
2. Fill the bag with the heart shapes. –Let your little one do this to practice their fine motor skills!
3. Squirt about half a bottle of clear hair gel into the bag and do your best to move the air pockets to the top of the bag.
4. Seal the bag with packing tape once you are done filling it with your ingredients. This will keep the hair gel from seeping out.

Explore and Observe!

Encourage your child to squish and slide the colorful candy hearts around the bag. The heart outline can be used to follow as a guide to line the hearts up around it. Which colors dissolve first? Which colors take longer? How long will it take for the heart candies to dissolve? What happens to the colors of the hearts as they dissolve?

For more ideas like this visit <https://www.fantasticfunandlearning.com/sensory-squish-bags.html>

Bartlett Beginnings Opportunities

Bartlett has so many offerings for families with babies. Please register for the groups you plan to attend by contacting Sara Gress, 907-796-8975 or sgress@bartlethospital.org, on the [Bartlett Calendar](#) website, or through [Bartlett Baby & Toddler Group Facebook Page](#).

Bartlett Baby-Parent Time

Every Thursday 12-1:30pm, in-person @ Bartlett Regional Hospital

Parents of Toddler Group

Mondays from 11 am-12:30 pm at the Gymnastics Academy



Dads & Kiddos Play Group

First Saturday of every month, meet as an outside walk and/play group. Details of location and time available via email sgress@bartlethospital.org or through [Bartlett Baby & Toddler Group Facebook Page](#).

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support Group

Wednesday, December 28th, 2022 at 6:00 pm via Zoom. Contact Sara Gress for more information and a link to the meeting.

"Real Talk" Mothers' Support Group

Wednesday, December 28th, 2022 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. Contact Sara Gress for more information and a link to the meeting.

Pick.Click.Give

Have you applied for your PFD yet? When you do, please keep us in mind.

Lovalaska
Pick.Click.Give.



Did you know, that YOUR charitable contributions keep the Dolly Parton Imagine Library open in Southeast? It's true! We rely on YOU to help us get free books into the hands of over 1200 children per month ages 0-5.

So please, pick, click, and give, to AEYC. You can find our page and instructions for giving [HERE](#).

Imagination Library

Book Title: K is for Kindness

Author: Risa Horiuchi

Summary of Book: From aardvark to zebra, this delightful cast of animal characters illustrates the many ways to show kindness to others, while teaching the youngest readers their ABCs.

Before Reading Try questions such as these:

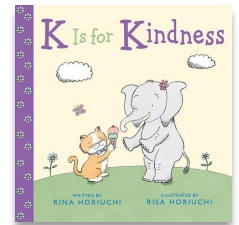
1. "What does kindness mean to you or in our family?"

During Reading (ask these questions):

1. "Which animal is showing kindness?"
2. "How do you think the animal who is receiving help or caring feels?"

After Reading (activity to extend book experience):

1. "What is a way that you show kindness?"



For additional literacy activities and parenting resources, visit <https://www.bestbeginningsalaska.org/>.

Seeking Support?

If you are seeking support and information for your family, reach out to [Help Me Grow AK](#). Their Family Support Specialists can help you navigate and connect you with resources statewide. Including child health and development, social and emotional resources, and prenatal care. You can reach a specialist at [1-833-HMG-ALASKA](tel:1-833-HMG-ALASKA).



thread Child Care Referrals and Child Care Assistance

Looking for child care? thread is ready to help you find the care your family needs. Try thread's online search tool at threadalaska.org/search. A quick search by child care program name or location gives you details like cost and ages served. For a free referral with a thread Specialist, call 800.278.3723, from 8 am - 4:30 pm, Monday-Friday. You'll receive tools and resources to assist with your search for quality care. thread also administers the Child Care Assistance Program to help eligible families cover the cost of care. For more information, call 855.479.2212 or email threadCCA@thrivalaska.com.



Your Dollars Make a Difference - Donate to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Did you know that donations from supportive people like YOU make books available to children all over SE Alaska? For \$30 a year you can ensure that a child receives a free book in the mail every month. Make your tax deductible donation today at: <http://www.aeyc-sea.org/imagination-library.html>. A big thanks to volunteers Trish Custard and Cora Brunette for giving their time to enroll children.



Alerts about this bulletin are emailed to families whose children are enrolled in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. Find this bulletin and many other family resources at www.juneaufamilies.org.

The Juneau Parent Bulletin is created by AEYC in coordination with **Partnerships for Families and Children**, with funding support from **thread**. Find us and Like us on [Facebook!](#) AEYC | 3200 Hospital Dr. Ste. 204, Juneau, AK | 907-789-1235 | www.aeyc-sea.org.