

Episode 30: Are Sleepovers Safe?

Christy Keating 00:08

Hi, friends and welcome to The Heartful Parent Podcast. I'm your host, Christy Keating. In this podcast, we talk about it all, our parenting, our partnering and our professional lives, because they are all a part of us. And we were never meant to do this alone.

Christy Keating 00:38

Hello, hello Heartful Parent listeners. It's Christy Keating, your host. And today we are going to spend some time together, you and I. I don't have a guest this week. And that was a very intentional decision, as the fall kind of starts. And we're all back in the thick of the school year, at least for those of us above the equator. For those of you below the equator, you've probably been in school all along. But my kids just started a couple of days ago. And, you know, we are really in that transition period.

I had a fantastic summer, I had the opportunity to travel with my family, to Italy and to Scotland. And I'll be honest, originally, my plan for today's podcast was to share with you some things that I learned about myself, about my family, and about traveling with kids, because we were gone for over four weeks on our adventure.

But I have decided to take a detour. And the reason for that is, well, multiple reasons. First, I think what we're going to talk about today may be more helpful to you as the school year gets underway. And secondly, because I had a recent exchange in a Facebook group that I'm a part of, for other lawyer moms. And one of them was talking about sort of her anxiety and fear about keeping our kids safe and some measures that she was taking around that. And it was a really interesting discussion to me for a number of reasons.

You know, I think you may have heard my episode or multiple episodes about Stranger danger and the disservice that I think it does to our kids. But a question came up in the course of that exchange on Facebook, and a parent said, hey, you know, if you're a child sexual abuse prevention expert, what are your thoughts about sleepovers?

So that is what we're going to talk about today, we're going to dig into sleepovers which when I was a kid, we're just kind of something most of us did. And in this day and age, they're much more controversial. There's a lot of families who decide that they just don't do sleepovers. And so I want to talk about that a little bit. Because the question that came to me was from a parent who says, We do let our kids do sleepovers. But I want to know what questions to ask, how to help keep my kids safe.

So that's where we're going to go today. And I want to start this conversation by acknowledging a couple of things. First, there are child sexual abuse prevention experts out there who are shocked or surprised, at least when I say that, yes, we do allow sleepovers in some situations. And because they take us sort of hard, no sleepover approach. The other thing that I want to say at the outset is that I recognize that families make different choices for lots of different reasons. Safety may or may not be one of those reasons.

And this podcast, my thoughts, and my suggestions about this are not in any way, shape, or form, meant to strongly advocate one method or the other or to tell you what you should or should not be doing. And it is certainly not to judge you if you don't do sleepovers. Or if you do do sleepovers. It is simply to share some information about you know, what the risks are, what the benefits are. And if you land in the benefits column, what are some things you can do to help keep your kids safer? So that's where I'm gonna go with this today.

So let's first talk about the risks. Let's talk about the things that prevent some families from allowing sleepovers and the first of those, of course, involves sexual abuse. We know and you've probably heard me say that approximately 93% of child sexual abuse occurs at the hands of people that we or our children know. So it's not the stranger lurking down the road ready to snatch your kid off the street, as we've talked about, it's somebody in our world, an older child or an adult. And that's an important thing to remember is that the perpetrators of child sexual abuse are not always adults 40% of the time, they are actually older children under the age of 18. So that's something to be aware of, you know, when sort of assessing overall risk.

Another reason that families don't like sleepovers is they worry about things like exposure to pornography, or exposure to other online content or video content, you know, movies, etc, that are not appropriate for their child, or not appropriate for any child when it comes to pornography. Right. So that is obviously a key concern of parents and something that we're going to talk about a little bit more. Another concern that I've heard is parents who worry at big group sleepovers about hazing or bullying, peer pressure, kids being sort of forced into doing things that they don't want to do. And then, you know, I've certainly also heard families talk about if they've got neurodivergent kids, that there are heightened risks around that, or any kid who has special needs.

So there may and I'm sure I've missed some of the reasons, some of the risks and some of the reasons that families decide not to let sleepovers happen, and that that's just kind of their standard, go to family rule. There are, however, also some benefits to sleepovers. And I think it's important to acknowledge those, and where you fall on the do the risks outweigh the benefits. You know, that's going to be different from family to family.

So I grew up having sleepovers. I have many, many fond memories of sleepovers. And I was a kid when I was really young, I actually tried to have a few sleepovers, and I panicked, and I didn't like being

away from home and I had my parents come pick me up in the middle of the night or probably late at night. And it took me a while before I felt ready to sleep away from my parents. But once I got to that point, I had many wonderful sleepovers in a number of different ways. So you know, going to another child's house, having another child come to mind, groups of kids coming for sleepover, birthday parties. And we actually also, my, my parents, God bless them, also hosted a birthday party for me, where they took me and oh, my goodness, probably five to seven of my friends, camping for a three day weekend, which is a form of sleepover, right? We were all sleeping in a tent. And my parents were sort of the only adults that were there taking care of all of us. I have so many fond memories of that.

And so, I do think that under the right circumstances, sleepovers can be great memory makers, they also can build confidence and independence, I shared that story about, you know, trying to have a sleepover at my friend, Jennifer Mac's house. And Jennifer, if you're out there, hello, and don't know where you are these days. But my parents having to come pick me up. Because I, you know, I was nervous about being away from them. But I gradually was able to do it. And that grew confidence and independence on my part, that certainly serves me still today.

I also think it in some circumstances really helped build some deeper friendships, you know, there's something about and I find this as a, you know, adult women as well. There's something about those late night conversations with a friend that for whatever reason, can allow us to kind of get deeper, go deeper, get to know each other better. And that certainly was true. You know, for us as teens when we weren't cut off at 8pm or 9pm. And we had those late night hours to sit and talk and explore and bond, you know, with one another, that created some deeper friendships.

I also think that it can help us as kids realize that the way our family does things isn't the only way to do things. So it can expose kids to different traditions, different cultures, you know, new foods, just overall different ways of doing things which I think can open the mind. It can build resilience, it can, you know, open the taste buds in some circumstances, like there's lots of new things that can be learned and lots of growth that can happen. So although there are certainly risks with sleepovers, there are definitely also benefits.

And my advice to families is that wherever you land on that, you decide, preferably before your children start school, what your take on it is. So if you are a no-sleepover family, decide that early, make sure that you know that you're a no sleepover family, don't wait until your child gets invited to a sleepover, right? Decide early and make sure your kiddo or kiddos knows what your family rules are. And they have some language to handle those requests. So that they don't feel caught in the headlights either. Or they're like, yes, I'd love to have a sleepover. And then you're shutting them down by saying no, no, we don't ever do sleepovers, right.

So decide what your rule is. convey that to your kids and give them skills and language to convey that and be prepared yourself. If another parent approaches you about it. If you are a pro-sleepover, you

also need to decide what your guidelines are around that. When will you allow it? When will you not allow it? You know, do you have specific ages at which it will and won't be allowed? Right? Do you start after a certain age and end before a certain age? How do you feel about different genders? Right? When I was growing up, I had a very close friend down the street who was a boy. And we went camping together and slept in a tent together. We had sleepovers. And that was fine with my parents. Now, he and his family moved away when he was about 12. So I don't know where that would have gone with our folks. You know, had we been 16? I don't I don't know. I can make some guesses. But you know, you need to decide for your family what feels like the right decision.

And then you also need to decide, like, are there other guidelines? Right? Do you are you a family that says sleepovers but only if girls and women are present or sleepovers. But not if there are older siblings or older male siblings or you know, whatever your your rules might be? There are countless iterations of that that I'm not going to go into. But it is a good idea to think through some of those things in advance, again, so that you and your child are ready to provide an answer. Now we have some guidelines and rules around that. And I'm not going to go into the specifics of what those are because I really want each family to feel like they get to make their own decisions.

But what I have advised my children to say if they are invited to a sleepover is I don't know, I will need to talk to my mom or to my dad so that they don't feel put on the spot to make an answer one way or the other. And again, whatever your decision is, even if you're a yes family, the number one best advice I can give you is to trust your gut. And if your gut says, not this time or not this family, please, please, please trust that. Okay, we don't listen to our guts often enough.

So here are sort of three key steps, if you will, if you are a yes. Family, if you're like, yep, we think the benefits outweigh the risks. There are some circumstances under which we're allowed, you know, we're willing to allow our child to attend a sleepover, there are really three key things that you need to do. The first one is to prepare your child. The second one is to have in depth conversations with the other family. And the third is to know what to do after you pick your child up from the sleepover. I'm gonna go into each of those in some detail.

So that you know, and feel prepared for those. So what do I mean by prepare your child? Well, first of all, you want to make sure that your child wants to have this sleepover right? Is this something that they want to do? Why do they want to do it? What about it is exciting to them, and really probe that apart to figure out what their motivation is and make sure that it's something that they want to do and not just something that they're feeling pressured into. You also want to gauge your individual child and know is this a child who is mature enough to have a sleepover right? I remember when my older daughter was quite a bit younger, and we had some neighbor children sleeping over. And my daughter was so excited to have other kids over that she couldn't sleep, she wouldn't sleep. She just wanted to talk the whole evening. And these other two children who were twins were very used to being around each other and having a you know compatriot that was was there spending the night because they were always

together. They were ready to go to bed and my kid was just like yammering on at that mean, we ultimately had to put them in separate rooms and put my daughter in a different room because she wouldn't let them sleep. So this is a place where knowing and sort of judging the maturity and read In us of our own individual children is a great idea.

If you determine that, yep, my kiddo's ready and they really want to go, then here are some things you need to do to prepare them. And I see this with a caveat. And the reminder that our children are never responsible for keeping themselves safe, and it is never ever their fault if something happens to them, really no matter what that is, right. And we would be naive and sort of not be engaging in very smart parenting if we didn't prepare them. So the first thing that you want to talk to them, of course, is make sure that you've had all those conversations about body safety, body autonomy, that you've read all the safety books that I recommend, you can find those on my website, and that you've had really in depth robust conversations about what is safe, what is not safe, you know, the, what touches Okay, and not okay. And that they get to decide what happens to their bodies and when and what to do, if something happens that they don't like, we want to make sure that's like the foundation, that we've had all of those conversations with our child.

The next thing that we want to make sure that we've talked to them about is pornography. And yes, I do mean for young children as well. There is a great book, it's actually recommended on my website called good pictures, bad pictures, and good pictures, bad pictures, Jr. They are great ways of diving into that conversation and explaining in really kid friendly terms, what pornography is and what our kids should do if they see it. So we want to make sure they have that information and those skills at the ready. We also want to talk to them about privacy.

So my younger daughter, for example, really doesn't hesitate to run around our home naked. And I that doesn't bother me, but doesn't bother my husband, her older sister doesn't love it. But, you know, that's just because she's like, I don't know, why she was naked. And, you know, forgetting, of course, that she was the same way, right? It's totally age appropriate. However, we have had conversations about the idea that we don't run around naked at school, we don't run around naked at other people's homes, right, there is an element, a necessary element of privacy that needs to take place. So well in our home, my daughter, you know, can pretty much has free rein to come into our room and as certainly see me without my skivvies on, that is not appropriate for her to do in someone else's home. So you know, reminding her that you don't go into the parents bedroom, you know, you close the door, when you use the bathroom, you let your friend close the door when they use the bathroom, etc, etc. having those conversations about privacy.

And then perhaps most importantly, you want to talk to them about what to do if they feel uncomfortable for any reason. And you want to give them a way out something to say or something to do to get them away out like to say, hey, I need to go home. And that might be a code phrase, like, Oh, I'm suddenly not feeling very well. Or, you know, depending on your level of trust with the other family, just hey, I

would like to go home, I don't, I would like to sleep in my own bed tonight. Or, you know, you give them some way to communicate with you. And preload a message that says, Mom, come get me, Dad, come get me. Whatever it is, you want to give them a way out. And in the ideal scenario, give them a way to contact you that does not rely on the other parent.

Now, I am not a fan, obviously, as you've probably heard me say, of kids having cell phones before about eighth grade, at least a smartphone. But giving them a so-called dumb phone giving them a watch that they can text you, even giving them a walkie talkie, if they're within a distance where that would work. So that they can reach out to you independently and say, Hey, I'm not feeling safe, or I'm feeling uncomfortable. And I'd like to come home. My older daughter, last year was invited to a sleepover. We agreed to let her go. And she got there and she couldn't pinpoint it. But she was feeling uncomfortable. And so she texted and said, You know what, Mom, I don't I don't feel safe staying here, or I don't feel good staying here. I'd like to come home. And so it was a birthday party. So she stayed for most of the party and then decided to come home. I did not question that. And I contacted the parent and said, hey, you know, I made up an excuse and said, Hey, our plans have changed a little bit and I need my kiddo to come home tonight. So I'll be picking her up at you know, next time. Our kids need to know that they have that out. And yeah, sure we want to build confidence and independence and resilience and all of those things, but not at the risk of them feeling safe. So it's important that we have those conversations with our child.

Okay, so that is the first piece of this puzzle, the preparing our child, you know, having all the safety talks talking about porn and other content and what to do if they see it, talking about privacy talking or and giving them a way to deal with it if they feel uncomfortable, or if they want a way out, providing them with a means by which to do that, even if it's using the other, you know, other parents cell phone and using a code phrase like, Mama my stomach started hurting, or I have diarrhea or whatever it might be, you know, something that makes it kind of non negotiable with the other parent that that they're going to come home.

Okay, so the second piece of this, as I mentioned, is we want to talk to the other family, we really want to have a lot of information about, you know, what's going to be going on, and, and this other family so that we can sort of gauge their reactions and set the stage for own child's safety. So I'm a believer that the more we can talk with other adults in our child's world, about the way that we are raising them, and what we're teaching them about safety, the better off we will be because what we're signaling in that we're not just gaining information from the other adults, but we are signaling to them, Hey, my kid knows what's up, I know what's up. So if you're going to target somebody, my kid's not the one to target. Right.

And what we know, based on research, and based on my own interactions with sexually violent predators, in my previous line of work, is that predators don't like well informed kids, they don't like kids who know about sex, who clearly have open lines of communication with their safe adults. That's not a

safe victim for them, because they know that that kid is much more likely to talk and tell. Right, so the more well informed your kiddo can be, the better. And what you want to make sure is that the other family knows that your child is really well informed. So you're going to want to have some conversations with them.

And here are some questions that should always be asked. And actually, in my safety presentations that I give, these are questions that should be asked for playdates as well as sleepovers. These are just generic like my child's coming to your house. This is information that I want to know. So the first is what is the plan? You know, what's everybody going to be doing? Are they going to be playing? Are they going to be playing outside? Are they going to be on video games? If so, what video games? Right? What are they going to be doing? I want to know what the general plan is. And I also want to know who will be home? Who's going to be in charge of supervising? Not that I want my child supervised every minute like let the kids play? But who's going to be the responsible adult? And do I know that person? Right? Do these parents have a plan to actually go out to the bar while the older brother watches the kids? I want to know about that. So who will be home? Will the parents be home the entire time? Or will a parent be home the entire time? Do they have other plans? Do they need to go pick up another child? Is there any circumstance under which the kids would be left by themselves. Now if you've got 12 year olds, that may not be a big deal. But if you've got a six year old or an eight year old, you know, maybe that's of more concern. So you want to know who will be home and sort of what the plans for supervision are.

Next, you want to find out what movies or games they will be watching or playing. Particularly if those are on line. If you are a parent who cares about what your child is exposed to, I happened to be one of those parents, for example, you know, my daughter is allowed to play Minecraft. She's not allowed to play Grand Theft Auto, for example. And so I want to know, like what is you know, what are the guidelines? And what will they be doing? If there is a movie that they're going to watch? I want to know what that movie is, and know that it's age appropriate and content appropriate for my kid. Those are all questions that I think are really important. And again, you know, the degree of information that you get about that might be different when you have a younger kid Oh versus a teen. But I think it's still important. I went to it what actually wasn't a sleepover but a party in high school that was hosted by a friend's parents. And my parents did not know to ask these kinds of questions. And the movie that was shown to all of us was Nightmare on Elm Street. Well, I am not a person who does well with horror, which is ironic given the horror that I've dealt with as a prosecutor, but, you know, like true movie horror, and yes, I know all of that. It's makeup, I know it's fake, etcetera, etcetera. I don't like it. I don't enjoy it. I never have. And it was frankly pretty traumatizing to me. And if we had known that that was what was going to be shown in advance. I probably would not have gone to that particular party or event. Or my parents would have said, hey, you know, do you mind picking something a little different for these kids? But that was the 80s, things were done a little bit differently back then.

If the plan involves going somewhere, it is important to know who will be driving, right? Is it going to be a parent, a grandparent, an older sibling, right? Like, I want to know who will be driving my child again. So I can gauge if that feels like a safe situation, my daughter growing up for a while, had a good friend, lovely family. Really lovely family. But dad had a significant alcohol problem. And he was a really nice guy. But I didn't want him ever driving my child. So when there was a birthday party where they were all going to be going somewhere, I was like, You know what, I'll bring my kid, I'll bring her in, I'll pick her up. Because I just couldn't trust or know that in that particular circumstance, that parent would be sober and able to drive safely. So you want to ask those kinds of questions. Also, I don't want a 16 year old who's just learned how to drive driving my child.

Okay, some other questions that are really important to ask, what are your rules about closed doors? Where will the kids be sleeping? What sort of privacy will they have? What would they do in the middle of the night? If there was a problem? All of those kinds of things that can so you can just gauge? Is this a family that is aware and paying attention? Are there structures set up to keep this kiddo safe?

And then a couple ones that might feel a little bit trickier to ask or more vulnerable to ask, but that are really important. First, what type of internet access for the kids have? You know, will they have an iPad at their disposal or computer at their disposal? Are there any parental controls and any monitoring that is in place, especially for those younger children? What do they have set up? You know, once kids have their own cell phones, obviously, that gets trickier. If you're not locking your own child's cell phone down or using parental controls and monitoring, then you can't really expect other parents to be doing that. So you know, newsflash, use those tools on your own kids cell phone as well.

And then the final one is do you have any firearms? And do you have any marijuana or edibles in your home? And if so, how are those things stored? So why do I pick those things out? I'm certain you could also ask about alcohol and prescription medication. But the reason that I pick out firearms and marijuana or edibles is twofold. One, no matter how many times you tell a child not to touch a gun, we know that if they see when they will, the odds are the research shows that they will very likely touch it. And so this doesn't have to be a judgment on someone who has or doesn't have guns, it doesn't have to be an argument about the Second Amendment, you don't want to go into any of that if somebody wants to have a firearm in their home, I'm not going to get super judgy in that moment about them as you know, humans, but I damn well want to know that that gun is locked up in a gun safe and not in somebody's bedside table or in their car, or, you know, behind the door, or in a desk drawer somewhere like I want to know where it is. And so we can ask that question in a really non judgmental way just to find out is there a gun in the house? And if so, is it stored safely? If it is not, you know, and they're like, Oh, don't worry, my kids can't reach it, or they know not to get to it. That would be a no-go for me.

And then the reason that I select out or sort of single out marijuana, and edibles especially edibles is because to kids, they often are packaged, they look like candy. And in fact, a lot of the edible packaging is made in such a way that mimics actual candy. It's made to look like a Twix bar or HERSHEY's Bar,

whatever. And so I would just want to know, is that something that they have in the house again, without judgment, right, if that's something that they want to partake in, that's totally not something I'm going to get engaged in, in condemning or criticizing, but I want to know that my kid isn't going to be able to get to it.

Okay, so those are all questions that you want to ask in advance. And I generally find like parents feel really uncomfortable having some of these questions. And so what you can do is you can blame me, you can say, Hey, I just listened to this podcast, and realize that there are questions I should be asking, that I haven't been asking. And this isn't to single you or your family out. It's something that we, moving forward, will be asking of every family and I am also happy to always share this information about our family. Right so that you're letting them know that you're not just picking on them, that this is, these are generic questions, and that you're happy to share that information.

So, you know, even in the course of this conversation, you can say something like just so you know, in the future, of course, I'll share specific plans. But when we have playdates at our home, unless the kids are watching a movie that we will have discussed with you in advance, it's a no screen zone, they won't have access to the internet. We don't have any firearms, we don't have any marijuana and edibles or you know, whatever your situation is, you know, our rules around closed doors are that while the kids are playing, doors are open during a sleepover, the doors closed, you know, for their own privacy and safety or whatever, you can share your situation to put that parent at ease. And like I said, blame me, I am happy to be the scapegoat in the situation, and be the one that you're like, Oh, I wouldn't really normally do this. But Christy Keating says that I need to, okay.

So that those are questions that you need to be talking about with them. And then I would also encourage you to let them know, Hey, I just want to make sure you are aware that we have really open and honest conversations with our child, they know about sex and safety, they know that they get the right to decide whatever happens to their body. And they prefer to have privacy when they're changing their clothes, or whatever it is, right. So you're laying out and you're like, I just want to make sure you know that our kid, you know, child is aware of that, you know, if they ask any questions, or let you know, something that's stemming from the conversations that we've had for them.

And again, as I mentioned earlier, in this conversation, what you're doing in that situation is telegraphing to the other parent, my child is not a good target, right? My child knows what's up, I know what's up, we have real open lines of communication, and you don't want to go there. Okay? Those are the conversations that I would have, really, with, preferably with all the adults that are going to be there in the home.

Okay, third piece of this puzzle is what to do after you pick your child up. And I wrote a blog article about this recently, but what we often see or what I often hear in my own life is, you know, somebody will come to pick up their child from a playdate. And as we're all at the door, they will ask that child, did

you have a good time? And the child will inevitably say yes. And then they'll, you know, they'll go on their way? Well, here's the problem with that. If the child didn't have a good time, or didn't feel safe, do you think they're gonna reveal that right there at the door with the offending parent or child standing right there? Hell no. They're gonna say yes, of course, I had a good time, right? Because they know social etiquette enough to see that. The problem is then, when we ask them later, so tell me you know what you did and what was fun, they are going to feel compelled to lie, because they've already told you they had a good time. And they know lying is bad, they don't want to get in trouble for lying. And so we decrease inadvertently, the likelihood that they will let us know that something happened.

So what I will often say at the door is hey, thanks so much for having so and so over. You know, is there anything that came up that I need to know about? What did the kids do, you can always ask what they did, because that won't, you know, cause a lie. And then when you are away from the door, and you're walking home, or you're in your own car, that's when you can ask some more detailed questions of your child to kind of make sure that everything felt good to them.

And here's the questions that I recommend. And I'll just kind of list them off. And then you can also find these in the resource that will point you to in the show notes. Here's what I asked my kids to tell me more about your playdate. And remember, you can tell me anything, even if you think I wouldn't like it. Okay, so you can tell them that. Then you say what did you do? What games did you play? What movies did you watch? Did anyone else play with you? Who was hanging out? Etc, etc. Then I asked what was your favorite part of the playdate? What was your least favorite part of the playdate, you want to? Again, give them opportunities to share things that they didn't like so much. I then follow that up with Did anything happen that gave you an O or an icky feeling? Or in any way make you feel uncomfortable? Okay. Then I asked, Did anyone try to get you to break a safety rule? And of course, our kids need to know safety rules in order to know whether or not those were broken. So you're going to need to have those discussions with your kiddo. That's a subject of perhaps another podcast.

And the final question that I really like to ask and I find the most helpful is would you want to go back again, if you were invited? Because your kid can be like, Yeah, I had a great time. I had a great time and a great time. And then you asked, Would you want to go back and they're like, oh, I don't know if I want to go back. So that is a great time to dig in a little bit more, but most importantly, to just trust our kids. And if they say I don't want to go back there, trust them on that. And, you know, if they're not at least immediately willing to share more information, don't force it. Now, it could be because the mom or the dad fed them some food they didn't like, always possible. But there could be something deeper at issue and you want to make sure that you ask that. So those are the questions that you want to ask after pickup.

So to recap, there are three key pieces to the puzzle if you decide that you are going to allow sleepovers. And even if you're only allowing, you know late overs, or or playdates, you want to start by preparing your child, you want to follow up by talking with the other family. And you want to round it all

out by saving key questions for when your child is back solely with you. Really, this is advice that applies to anytime your child is going to spend time in another home, that you want to ask these questions.

Whatever your decision is, around sleepovers, there's two important things that I want to comment on. The first is, no matter what you can never guarantee your child's safety, you could decide not to do sleepovers, and your child can still be sexually abused. You could decide to do sleepovers, and your child could be sexually abused. There is never a guarantee of safety when it comes to parenting our children. That's just the reality. And we need to recognize and own that and, you know, really be willing to, to accept that, that we can do what we can do, but we can't control everything.

The second thing I think is really important is that whatever your decision is to allow them or not to allow them, you do not need to justify your decision to anyone. Every family needs to make their own choices around this. And we as parents need to support other parents' choices. So if you're pro-sleepover, and another family says yeah, we don't do sleepovers, so my child can't come over, do not shame or blame them or say, Oh, that's so unreasonable. Support each other. Every parent is doing the best that they can and making the best decisions they can with the information that they have. I applaud that. I support that. And you should never feel pressured into something that doesn't feel okay for you or your kid.

Alright. I have talked way longer than I anticipated. But I hope this answers the question of, you know, should we have sleepovers? Should we not have sleepovers? And if we do, how do we keep our kids safe? Please reach out to me through my website, through my weekly emails. Let me know if you have questions, concerns, comments. I'm all ears. I know this is controversial. I know there are many parents who are listening, that's just nuts. We would never do it. And there are other parents that are cheering me on and saying yes, you know, bring childhood back. Neither one of those is wrong. And I'd love to hear your feedback.

All right, I will sign off here and wish you a week of happy parenting, hurtful parenting and good self care. I look forward to touching base with you next week. And we'll be back with more great heartfelt parenting information.

Take care. Cheers.