



## **The Roller Coaster of Childrearing: America Is Riding the “Pendulum of Parenting”** **By Kelly Nault**

The “pendulum of parenting” is a common obstacle that prevents many moms (and dads) from enjoying parenting more.

When something flies out of your mouth that you wish you could take back, when you feel taken advantage of, or when you think your children don’t appreciate all that you do, there’s a good chance you’re on this roller coaster of childrearing I call the “Pendulum of Parenting.”

America seems to have particular problems with this pendulum. As a direct result of refusing to use “outdated” parenting strategies from earlier generations, many moms find themselves swinging between two extremes: the “Mussolina Mom” and the “Pillow-Soft Mom,” as I call them in the first chapter of my parenting book *When You’re About To Go Off The Deep End, Don’t Take Your Kids With You*.

The best way to understand the Mussolina Mom and the Pillow-Soft Mom is to take a glimpse at their parenting methods. Here’s a quick look at these two extremes.

### **1. “Mussolina Mom”**

Mussolina Mom is the boss, and she wouldn’t have it any other way. She is heavy-handed, wanting her way at all costs. This mom establishes a home of strict boundaries with little flexibility, and she often has a quick temper. Her raised voice can often be heard dictating what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. Yelling, grounding, and taking away privileges are a few of the ways this mom attempts to “make” her kids listen. Her downfall? Her children often find ways of secretly doing what they want anyhow—sometimes in dangerous situations. Ultimately, this mom is defeated on the battlefield of her own home.

### **2. “Pillow-Soft Mom”**

Pillow-Soft Mom is sweet, nice, and a true pushover. She wants peace at all costs and uses passive approaches to deal with conflict—often reasoning with her children only to later give in. She is generally softer spoken, gives many “chances,” and does for her kids what her kids could do for themselves. This home is all about flexibility with little to no boundaries. The downfall? Children run the household, dictating to Mom what to do; they learn to use guilt and manipulation to get their way.

## How to Attain Parenting Balance in Childrearing

Parents around the world are on this pendulum of parenting—swinging back and forth between Mussolina Mom and Pillowy-Soft Mom. Most moms vacillate between the two styles, and the results are bad for parent and child alike.

When the pendulum is in full swing, it can be downright exhausting for a mom. When “Pillowy Soft Mom” starts to feel taken advantage of, her resentment slowly builds until she abandons all “niceties” and transforms into the screaming “Mussolina Mom.”

Eventually “Mussolina” feels remorse and guilt over her explosive temper, and she retreats back into “Pillowy-Soft Mom” mode, trying to make it up to her kids until—you guessed it—she feels taken advantage of again. This back and forth method is ineffective. It’s tiring for Mom and terribly confusing for the kids.

The solution? A combination of the two Moms. The flexibility of Pillowy-Soft Mom blended with the boundaries of Mussolina Mom make for one amazing parent—a true “Ultimate Mom”!

### Meet Ultimate Mom

Ultimate Mom (not perfect mom) shares her emotions in healthy ways, and she encourages her kids to do the same. She supports her children in their lives, but she also has a life of her own!

Ultimate Mom focuses on what her kids can learn from conflict and provides flexibility within clearly defined boundaries. She follows her word with consistent actions, commanding respect by giving respect. With gentle firmness she holds her children accountable for their actions, inspiring and instilling responsibility, confidence and honesty.

This parenting method is the best approach to childrearing. America can avoid the ups and downs of pendulum-style parenting by seeking balance between the two extremes. A healthy combination of flexibility and firmness, expectation and an easy-going approach, is the key to happy, healthy homes.

Kelly Nault, MA corporate spokesperson and award winning parenting author of *When You're About To Go Off The Deep End, Don't Take Your Kids With You* inspires moms to put themselves first—for the sake of their children. She shares time-tested tools that motivate children to want to be well behaved, responsible and happy! Sign up for her free online parenting course at [www.UltimateParenting.com](http://www.UltimateParenting.com).

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