# When to worry. ⬇

I'll tell you something else that's super interesting. So, so this particular episode is all about when to worry, but we can flip it on its, on its head and we can talk about when to think your child is gifted. And there was this huge trauma around then have I failed her, you know, flagging it, if I flag it, am I flagging the fact that I'm not a good parent?

And it's a place that I have spent the entire five years of my parenting journey, immersed and living in deeply.

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Subscribe to the [00:01:00] podcast, download the Parents Sense app, and Catch Maker every week to make the most of that first year of your little one's life. And now, meet your host. Welcome back mums and dads. This is Sense by Meg Faure and I am Meg Faure and I'm usually your host on Sense by Meg Faure. But we have been starting to have a guest host who joins me once a month to interview me for a change.

And I am loving these episodes. And so are you, because we've seen those from the reviews and also from these stats. So I am very, very excited today to welcome back as host for today, Tove Gant. Tove, thank you for joining us as host. Yeah, thanks for having me, Meg. I have to say I'm very excited about today's topic.

 It's a topic that is very close to my heart and it's a place that I have spent the entire five years of my parenting journey immersed and living in deeply, which is, worry, particularly worrying around your [00:02:00] child's development. And I think I don't think any parents who's on the journey or has been on the journey, will not be familiar with being worried or being anxious around.

their kids development. And so I, I feel like it's a wonderful place for us to start, chatting. And I'm very happy that you're, you're going to walk me through it. Absolutely. And you're right. I mean, worry is just, it's such a pervasive part of parenting. If we're not worrying about how much sleep we're going to get that night, we're worrying about our children's development.

And, you know, we live in a world where milestones are like, almost like cast in stone. And if your child doesn't hit that milestone when your friends. Childhood set milestone. You start to think, Oh my goodness, is there something wrong with my child? So yes, degrees of worry every day are probably part of the pervasive parenting journey.

Absolutely. And I mean, just to, to kind of shed some light on my journey and then I guess guide me and, and I, other parents who are probably at different [00:03:00] stages, but you know, for me, I had gray was my first, she's five now she, uh, is special needs. So, you know, but we only got a diagnosis when she was two.

So we spent the first kind of two years or, I mean, we picked up. Challenges relatively like six or seven months, but because I was very milestone driven, but she missed every milestone and it's such an interesting journey because. You, you know, the milestones are there and you're like, you know, when, when your kids are hitting them, then you're like, yes, the milestones, when your kids not hitting them, you're like, oh, they're on their own journey.

So, you know, there's also this like world where you start convincing yourself that your child is different and every child has a unique path. And, and so I guess finding. One of the questions to unpack is understanding the difference between when do you actually worry as a parent? And when is it just your child being your child?

Absolutely. So, I mean, first of all, the milestones are there [00:04:00] for a reason. And as clinicians and occupational therapists, like I am, we do watch the milestones. We, we, we very aware of the milestones, but Anybody who's responsible and that should be any medical professional or therapists should be giving you quite broad ranges of normal, because the reality is that milestones don't happen on a day they happen in a range.

And if any parents are using the parent sense app, they, and they go to the play section of the app, and there's a section called. milestone checklist, you will see the range of what the milestones are. And they're actually very, very broad. You know, it isn't that every baby in the whole world smiles at six weeks.

 You know, we give you a nice range of, you know, anywhere between, I think it's three and eight weeks in the app or three and nine weeks. So it's quite a wide range that we allow. And walking, I mean, walking's a classically wide milestone. Walking can start as early as nine months and it could start as late as 18 months.

And all of that is completely normal. So, anything, I mean, Walking at 18 months for the first time is not classified as something that [00:05:00] anybody would be getting hysterical about and worried about. So you can see that those milestones can be very, very broad. Having said that, when we do talk about when to worry is when you are having clusters of milestones.

So if a little kitty like Gray, uh, in your case, misses every milestone, then yes, you know, certainly therapists are all watching and thinking and pediatricians should be alert. And then we have clusters of milestones, which we can also talk about. Yeah, so I guess unpacking that, that's super interesting because if I look at Jagger, who's my second, and Nova, who's my third, who's Jagger definitely has been slower on the, the communicative and talking piece.

And, you know, we, you know, obviously got panicked around it. You've been part of that journey with me, quite panicked around it. And especially when school flagged his, his delay in speech. You know, we always kind of wrote it off to the fact that his older sibling, who he spends all his time with, doesn't [00:06:00] communicate and uses cards because she's nonverbal and is still really a baby developmentally.

Nova's premie. And so we had the, the milestone journey with her as well. And I guess one of the questions is, and you, you just kind of mentioned it as the cluster of, of milestones and when to worry, I guess what, what defines a cluster? Is it, you know, for us, Gray didn't really smile. Her motor skills were not good.

Like, you know, does it have to be two or three before you start to panic? Like, is there one that outweighs another? Like, how do you, you know, how do you determine when you actually start, you know, needing to get professionals involved. So we tend to look at clusters within milestone categories. So if you can picture that you've got milestone categories of verbal abilities or language abilities, you've got a milestone category of social, social category.

You've got a milestone category of gross motor, a milestone category of fine motor. So [00:07:00] those, those are kind of your four main categories. And then there are a couple of others as well, but let's look at those. So. I tend to look at milestone clusters within categories. So, so let's say for instance, you had a little one who, hated tummy time, never rolled, like literally never rolled.

 And then eventually sat only a month late for sitting, and they never crawled. And now he's 11 months old. So now that's enough of a cluster of milestones for me to say something's going on with his muscle tone for sure. Because I can see that, you know, the whole, the whole cluster with within gross motor.

Is reflecting that there's something going on with his muscle tone and, you know, for some reason, uh, likewise with social emotional, you know, you, you would, you expect little ones to make eye contact by three weeks. You expect them to smile by around six to eight weeks. You expect them to start falling in love and being very specific about a certain parent [00:08:00] at about three or four months.

They should really, you know, let know that parent respond to you. They should turn towards sounds. They should. Be pointing in a direction, you know, to, to, to tell you that they want something and that should happen before a year of age. And all of those things are our social milestones. Now, if that whole cluster doesn't happen, they don't make eye contact.

They are not smiling by like 18 weeks. They are, they never point, they get to a year of age. They're never trying to get your attention to look in a direction. And then also then later on, they have very high levels of dysregulation emotionally. So massive temper tantrums where they can't self regulate.

Then we start to think, or they just don't socially connect with another child. They're not having temper tantrums, but they're living in their own world. Then we start to think, Hmm, what's going on on an emotional level. And then language has its own cluster set as well. So, you know, did they turn towards sounds?

Did they, again, point in a direction as part of language, the language and. And emotional can be quite linked, but when you start to see clusters of delay all the way through, then you do get concerned. So [00:09:00] that's the one thing you get concerned about is if in a category of milestones, there are delays in every milestone in that category.

And the other one, which is a more global category, which is obviously what happened with gray is where it crosses across all categories. So, you know, they're doing everything late and then we would definitely be concerned. So. At, at one milestone in isolation. And one milestone in isolation in another category would not make me look, look for any flags.

Okay. And that's because, that's interesting. You know, like the common rhetoric between parents is, oh my boy, you know, boys are way more physical, so the language will be a bit late. And I, I mean, I'm. The perfect culprit of this, right? Jagger's language will be a little bit later or his emotions are much bigger.

He can't regulate his emotions as well as girls can. And so like I allow for the temper tantrums to be bigger or the, the, the language to be later. I didn't flag it. You know, the irony for me is that I was on such an intense journey with gray, like we got intervention [00:10:00] from. You know, six months we speech therapy OT, we've had every like professional under the sun and my second kid, I'm like, Oh, it's fine.

So, you know, you would think as a parent, you'd been on the journey, you'd be hyper alert to it, but I still made the excuses. I don't know if it's because it's a different gender, you know, he's a boy. And so I was like, Oh, but look how physically is he walked quicker and he crawls and he, you know, he does all these things.

Oh, but he struggles to regulate his emotions and his speech is not great. But. You know, that that's a boy thing, but, you know, so it's an interesting piece. I think that parents often. You know, tell themselves, right. To, to yeah, kind of get through or convince themselves that there's not an issue. And actually bring something up very important.

It's, it's something we call individual differences and individual differences are very important to recognize that some little ones will actually just be late on things and they'll be on the, on the far end of the continuum on something. And then it'll just fall into place. And, in case in a point, [00:11:00] one of the children that I know in my social circle, I mean, she spoke at like three years old.

She did not say a word before three years old. And I was thinking, Oh yeah, because my son who was the same age as her, was speaking his first words at 10 months. He had 11 words by a year, a year of age. So I thought this kid, I mean, if she's not saying a single word at three, there's a problem, but when she started speaking, she spoke in sentences.

She'd been taking it all in. She understood everything. And that's, you know, that's also important to understand the custody. So she was very social. She made eye contact. She was connecting with people. She understood everything. You could give her an instruction. You could do something. She was listening.

She was. on it, but she didn't say a word. And the day she started speaking, she just spoke in sentences. And of course she went on to do a, a, a degree in psychology and the arts. So, you know, she had to have language to do that. So, you know, it didn't even predict long term negatively. So you definitely do get into individual differences, which is why like what you're saying, it's really difficult with your second one, [00:12:00] because he's not speaking as well as you maybe would consider he should be.

And yet at the same time, could this just be that he's Spending all his energy in other areas. He's certainly not as gray was globally delayed. He does have a language delay, but you know, is it something to get hysterical about? Exactly. And I mean, I think this is also another point. Parents often beat themselves up or give themselves and I say parents, I'm definitely referring to myself a hard time about.

 The environment versus, you know, who your child just naturally is. So how much, uh, like how much of a role or control as a parent do I have to, to promote, you know, the speech and all of these opportunities and how much of it is just him? Like he's just not interested. Yeah. So you getting into the nature, nurture debate, and it's a very good debate with this particular topic.

So there is a certain amount that is predisposed in their genetics. Okay. So there would have been a certain amount that was laid down firmly. Maybe his dad [00:13:00] spoke late. Maybe his dad wasn't a terrible person. I don't know. I mean, he's a lawyer. He obviously is, but, you know, for whatever reason, and you're very verbal as well, but, so, you know, you maybe they can't get a word in edgeways, but then that comes to that comes to nurture.

So your, your nature, definitely genetically, there is a predisposition to strengths and weaknesses in different. cluster areas. But the honest truth is, and we're knowing this more and more, is that those genes that you're born with are turned on by the environment or turned off by the environment. And so your environment has by far the larger impact.

And part of that is in epigenetics. So that is, you know, it's something that certain genes that he had might have been turned on or on and off for whatever reason, trauma in pregnancy, you know, malnutrition in pregnancy in some moms, you know, whatever it is, some genes can get turned on and off. And then definitely what happens afterwards is important.

And this is obviously where the whole guilt trip falls onto us [00:14:00] as parents, because we then look at ourselves and go, okay, so if like more than 50 percent of this rests on me, like, where did I go wrong? You know? So it's a really. It's a really difficult thing with gray. It's it was hardwired in her genes.

There was no two ways about what was going to happen. It's been genetically picked up, but the truth is that although Jagger might have had a low, a, A predisposition towards language delay, what does go on in terms of how much time we spend reading to our children, focusing on language, unfortunately is very, very important, you know, and I know that you do an incredible job because I have seen you, you, I mean, I, I, it's, I, there's always staggers me when I see just how enriched your children's environment is, but there certainly is a lot we can do as parents and it does impact their behavior.

development going forward. And it, you know, it is an interesting point to me because you know, you often look at two kids and now just looking at like my sister and I, who grew up in the same house [00:15:00] with the same parents, with the same environments and are yet so fundamentally different as people in terms of just how we communicate and who we are.

And I look at Jagger and Nova and, you know, Jagger, I think I said this to you yesterday, Jagger will You know, I, I, like with him, I was hyper vigilant about classes every day. Like every day there had to be an activity in a class because I was so fearful that he would pick up on Gray's, inability to communicate and all her challenges, and internalize them.

And so I, I kind of, I might've even overexposed him, you know, we were just busy all the time doing things and with Nova being the third and being preemie and just kind of being very out of our depth. We've done none of that. And yet she is way more engaged. If I could take them both to the same class that Jagger has been going to for like two years, Nova has been going to for two weeks, she's way more engaged in that class than he ever is.

He'd rather sit on the outside and look in where she will like dart herself in. And it's just so interesting to [00:16:00] me because. You know, then I wonder, like, by just leaving her and making her fuss bait with the situation and like, get on with it, have I actually, like, it's that kind of concept of that struggle and needing, have I actually better fostered that, like, sense of, self and her voice because she's had to fight for it more than Jagger, who was given all this attention because we were so fearful.

So it's really interesting because you're talking about enriched environments here and let's, let's, let's try and just. Like debunk, what is an enriched environment? You could say that an enriched environment is an activity every single day of the week, because surely that's an enriched environment. I mean, first of all, we spending a shitload of money on it.

And second of all, we spending a cartload of time on it. And then thirdly, you know, we really heavily invested in this. So surely that should be an enriched environment, but the reality for babies is that they actually need very little for an environment to be enriched. And it is possible that. Nova's environment has been just as enriched, if not more enriched [00:17:00] than Jagger's was just not necessarily by spending a lot of money.

And I often say to parents, just be very careful about the over scheduling and too many toys. And, and those two things are, you know, we, we kind of look at this and I mean, I wrote it in my very first book, Baby Sense. And in fact. It's a great quote, which we'll put into the show notes. It was a quote that I took out of a book that was written in 1966 by a guy's surname was Schaeffer, and I need to find the book, the net words again.

But it basically said, parenting is very often not a case of the more the better. In fact, it is the opposite. And sometimes The less we're doing, the more enriched, and that sounds like the most arse about face comment I could possibly make, but you know, if, if I've watched, you know, we used to go to the trans guy and actually go into the trans guy fairly soon again.

And I used to watch the mummies who really didn't have anything to do except. Okay. For children. And I [00:18:00] would watch how enriched those children's lives were. I mean, they would be on their mom's backs, listening to conversations taken for walks down the word, word, having all of that vestibular stimulation and then sat under a chair with under a tree with their mom and had had conversations, things to play with that were very basic, but they had human contact, human time, lots of language, no technology, not a lot of toys had to be creative.

Moms had to be creative, occupy them. Everybody was trying to not get their child bored and actually at the end of the day, not doing much with them. That is just as enriched an environment as the one that, for instance, Nova grew up in, which was also, you know, not being overscheduled. So I think, I think we do need to be super careful about overscheduling and thinking that toys, technology, and, and activities are going to be that, you know, that fabulous kind of, you know, NT, you know.

that that pill that we can give to our child and that solution. In fact, children actually need less. The things that [00:19:00] they do need though, and that they need a lot of this episode is brought to us by parent sense, the all in one baby and parenting app that helped you make the most of your baby's first year.

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Download ParentSense app now from your app store and take the guesswork out of parenting. The things that they do need though, and that they need a lot of, are language, I mean, a huge amount of language talking through. And when I talk to parents about talking, I mean, it is literally really focusing in on the, on the tone that you use on the speed at which you're [00:20:00] speaking on picking up on their words.

I mean, I spent some time with your kiddies yesterday and, you know, Nova is just 12 months old. She's actually 10 months adjusted age. She is saying words and I could hear them. And. Repeating them back to her and say, and picking them up because when you do that, she goes, I've made that connection and somebody else actually connected that I've made the connection, you know?

And so, and that takes a lot of focus, time and attention. And when we are busy parents, we just don't always have the time for that. And when we rushing from activity to activity, we also don't. So I think, I think it is important when we thinking about milestones and stimulation that we don't. You fall into that pressure pit of like, you know, into every single group we can get them into.

Yeah. I mean, I think, and I think that's where, I mean, some apps, the app I used with gray was incredibly beneficial, but also very detrimental as, as a parent. They weren't great at giving me brackets. And it was like, she should [00:21:00] reach this milestone by this date. And, and she wasn't, and I'm in hindsight, it's great because it flagged to me.

I was like, she's missing so many milestones, but it also just made me feel in the beginning. Really, really awful as a parent, I was doing all these activities. I was doing all this stuff and the guilt and this, and I was like, what am I doing wrong? Why is everyone else's child getting there? And mine isn't.

And there was this huge trauma around then have I failed her, you know, flagging it. If I flag it, am I flagging the fact that I'm not a good parent? I haven't provided her with the stimulus she needs. And so there was all of this kind of, Trauma. And I think that trauma, yes, that's a word that popped to my mind.

Yeah. A lot of trauma around, around that space and the kind of narrative. And I think friends also like, you know, your friends in your social circles, people underestimate the power of saying, well, obviously your child will do that at this age. And, you know, they are parents whose child isn't doing it at this age.

And that doesn't always mean it's a problem, but, you know, people with their language, it's so [00:22:00] like definite, it's so like you should. And I think that, you know, something you've said now as well, where there's. There's a world where actually children are often better off when it's just about being in the space of your parent rather than doing more, because that's what my thing was.

It was like, okay, I must do more with Gray now. And I was living in Switzerland and there were none of those things. And then I was like, well, was she not all these things? Because I didn't take her to these classes and I didn't do these things because they didn't exist where I lived, in English. And so I couldn't.

And so then I was like, was this my fault? Is she missing all of the stuff? Because it's, because I didn't do something. So the narrative as well, kind of in the community around when you are missing those things, I think is not handled. No, it's not. And I'll tell you something else. It's super interesting.

So, so this particular episode is all about when to worry, but we can flip it on its, on its head. And we can talk about when to think your child is gifted. And, you know, I can tell you that there are lots of parents who go, Oh, check [00:23:00] that. Box tick that box. So brilliant. So brilliant. I, you know, and I mean, moms, some of you listening to me will be that mom, because I know that I was, James was advanced on almost every milestone, but I will tell you when I, what I was thinking at the time, completely erroneously, I was thinking, well, the fact that he's doing so well at this means that he's obviously going to do so well at X, Y, Z later on.

And the reality is that those early milestones generally. Do not code for long term success. And I want to give you, I want to explain this principle because it's in a very important principle, taking milestones slowly when children reach them either at round date or even a little bit late, but I'd take a long time with them, those children tend to consolidate those milestones and those learnings a lot better.

And that means that their foundation for future success is actually much more robust. So an example is. James, crawled at seven months and he was walking at [00:24:00] nine months, but when he crawled at seven months, he crawled with his one leg sticking out to the side and he was a lopsided crawler. And he just wanted to get out of crawling as fast as possible and get up and walking as fast as As fast as possible.

And he was in a rush and he didn't consolidate anything. And so fast track seven years, eight years, where all he wanted to be was a, was a Springbok rugby player, a Springbok cricketer. The reality was that actually he was actually quite an incoordinated ball skills kid because he hadn't really consolidated his motor skills.

He went on to be really successful in other areas of sport because of determination. But if you want to break it down into his gross motor coordination. He took, he was in such a rush to get through his gross motor milestones early on that he didn't consolidate them. So I do think that, you know, for those parents, for those moms who've got kids who have, you know, are on target or a little bit delayed, like just sit with it.

It's awesome. It really is awesome. You know, it's, it's the, those kids that are rushing through milestones often like, and you've seen it with the [00:25:00] little ones who stutter. They're just like, they're trying to get their words out so quickly that they, they just. You know, and it becomes, you know, again, the same story.

So then don't consolidate. So I just think be very careful about being judgy moms and be very careful moms who are feeling judged. Don't worry about those other kids, you know, don't compare. And, it all, it all actually comes out in the wash unless there is a big cluster of milestones and that's a totally different story, but generally it comes out in the wash.

And I mean, so Meg, that was interesting because when we went through the kind of cluster of milestones, as you said, those milestones have big gaps, right? They can sometimes fall over six weeks, two months. And we all know that early intervention that is key, right? And so, you know, you know, you talk about, okay, but at one year, all of these things kind of added up.

But I mean, I know we found with Gray. We intervened very quickly and, and I have no doubt, just based on the understanding and the severity of the other children with her condition, that [00:26:00] we, we dealt with a lot of things that would have been a lot harder long term because at six months we were like, this is a problem.

We need to deal with it. I guess what is the rule of thumb there? Because early interventions key, but you don't want to panic too early. But then I remember, a neuro development, doctor saying to me, Like, does it hurt? She was like, if you're worried, OT, physio and speech, at the end of the day, if there's nothing wrong, all you've done is given your kid some help and a step up.

So, I mean, I guess the question is what is the rule of thumb there? No. So as an occupational therapist, I am obsessed with early intervention. As soon as something is picked up, it, the quicker you get in, The quicker you stop the gaps, the, just the outcomes are changed dramatically. And I want to give you an illustration.

If you can picture a point in time and you picture two lines going out from that point out into the future. Okay. They all start at the same point and they go out into the future. So you could maybe look at a clock and you've got two [00:27:00] hands going out from the center of the clock, right at the middle of the center of that clock, where those two hands are going out in a direction.

They're very close together, but you move those hands just like a little degree. And even a minute, if you're on a clock out apart from each other and that angle gets slightly wider at the middle, it's still not very much at all, but going out further, the distance between where that one hand ends up in that other hands ends up is like five minutes, even though it was only just a degree right in the middle.

And that's an important illustration of what can happen with early intervention. Just, you know, doing that early intervention changes a trajectory for the long term. dramatically. So early intervention is very, very important. Now, let's have a look at a couple of examples of where early intervention worked and, and why, why, why, how we caught the situation and what ended up happening.

And, I had a little boy who was referred to my practice, by, I think it was Paul Sinclair, or Dr. Jadaykin actually, one of the pediatricians in Cape Town. [00:28:00] He referred a little boy to me who, was crying incessantly and wouldn't sleep. And he said to the parents, look, go for sleep problems. But he had written me a note and he said to me, look, just, they're there for sleep problems, but can you just check what's going on in terms of the social emotional?

Anyway, I picked this little boy up on the first day he came into my practice and he was crying incessantly and I could see he was making zero eye contact at all. And so he was about six months old. There was no eye contact. He looked straight over my shoulder. He was super fussy. And I just knew immediately that we were dealing with.

A regulation difficulty. And there was enough of a cluster of indications. He wasn't sleeping. He was dysregulated. He was crying a lot. He wasn't making emotional connection with his parents. He hadn't made eye contact by six months and he wasn't smiling. And I knew that was sufficient for me to say, we've got a real cluster going on here.

And so I did my session with them and I found out what was going on. And one of the things that was happening with them is that he was using a. And on their phone, he was using a TV program to self soothe. It was a TV program called In the Night Garden. [00:29:00] And every time he would come into the session and he was, he was only saw him twice before he started to intervene.

They would just, so that they could speak to me because he cried so much, they would put their phone in his hand with the night garden in on, and he would immediately go quiet. And so I watched this and obviously this went on in the session. And this was a. It was a really, really, really fussy and definitely going to be autistic little boy in my mind.

And so my very first session of intervention, which was the third time I saw them, I said, right, we're going to do only one thing for this week, for one week. And obviously I'd handled him a bit and done some work with him. But I said, for this week, the only thing you're going to do is he's going to have zero technology.

And I mean, he will not see a screen at all for a week. And the mom said to me, how am I going to soothe him? And I said, Breastfeed them if you need to, like do whatever you can, just soothe them. Like, I know that it's going to be painful, but we're getting them off the technology. Anyway, I had videoed all of these sessions and I still use them for teaching and they came in the next session and the response was, Oh my word.

What happened to our baby, and we [00:30:00] had completely unlocked him. And he, he, he did end up with an a, an autistic spectrum diagnosis, but just the very small thing at very early on of removing technology, we had to do a lot more things. I mean, that was just the, it was just the smallest thing, but the illustration is that the smallest thing at that time made such a difference.

And so early intervention, if they had come to me when he was nine months old or 12 months old, he would have missed so many more milestones, but that very small intervention, we went on and did a lot more, really made all the difference and, and he did end up on the spectr but as I said, really not severe.

So I think, you know, that's an example. Another example is my middle child, just was a very laid back little one. And I could see. She was fine on tummy time. She sat beautifully on time, but at about 10 months, I could see she was never going to crawl. And the reason was that every time I put her on her tummy, she would lift her hands off the ground and her feet.

And she'd be in one of those kind of bow or airplane positions. She wasn't coming, she wasn't putting her hands down on the floor. It wasn't sensory. I knew that very clearly. So I knew it was because she hadn't [00:31:00] developed her flexor muscles. So I phoned my friend who was a physio and I said to her, listen, she needs, just to get her flexor muscles activated, I need three sessions of physio at 10 months old.

And literally three sessions of physio at 10 months old, Her flexion came in, she was crawling, and then she was a consolidated crawler, unlike James, and she crawled then for the next kind of five months and then walked at whatever, 13 months or whatever it was. So the point is that, you know, I think early intervention is critically important, but early panic isn't critically important.

And so it's kind of getting that. So I guess that, that ties in really well with the next question I've got for you, which is how, when do you, as a parent rely on your instinct? And when do you start saying like, but this is what the books say, and this is what the app say, and this is what should be happening.

Like where is, how do we find that balance? Right. Because that, that's exactly what you're saying. Like, you know, some things just take a little bit longer and not panic and you [00:32:00] don't want to panic. But. But at the same time, they're quite far off there, what, you know, what it's saying on the app or whatever.

And so at what stage do you just, does a parent like know instinctually, and then there's also the denial, right? Like I know having done the journey with Gray, that a massive piece of what we see families go through, and it's not just grades or autistic diagnosis, ADHD, any diagnosis, that's not the norm, right?

 The biggest piece is actually getting the parents. over the line. It's a denial piece, right? Yeah. So that balance instinct denial versus like actually you need to. So the first thing is instinct. Maternal instinct is just everything. You know, if there's, if there's a niggling thought at the back of your mind, You need to see somebody and that should be every time.

And, my recommendation, and I hope I don't get shut down about this, is that you actually see a therapist rather than necessarily a pediatrician. [00:33:00] And I will explain why pediatricians are my, my right hand and I'm their right hand in many situations and in health, there's nobody who's going to ever do anything better than them.

But most pediatricians will, by their own admission, talk about the fact that on the neurodevelopmental side of things, a good NDT physiotherapist, who's qualified in pediatrics or a good NDT occupational therapist who's qualified in pediatrics is probably a really good place to start. So you might want to go to your pede, but there's a chance that he's going to say, you got a healthy little one, let's give it another month or two.

My, with my kids, it was just like, I'm just straight off to physio. I'm just going to go and just, just get it checked out. And the physio will usually give you three exercises to do at home, come back in a month. At least you're doing something then, you know? So, so first, first things first, my mother's instinct is.

It's just overwhelming for me, you know, red, you know, red bell and mom comes in. I mean, mom's come to me all the time. I will usually, as a therapist, try and allay their concerns and tell them, you know what, [00:34:00] let's not panic. But I will also usually say to them, why don't we try X, Y, and Z? Why don't we turn off the TV for a week completely?

Why don't we try and speak a little bit more to our little one? Why don't we, you know, just do that a little bit extra tummy time or whatever it is. So I do, I do think starting, if you've got an instinct. You should, somebody should be responding to you. And then the second thing is, is that if you're, if you've noticed one or two things that are.

Alarmingly delayed. I, and you are concerned. And even if you're not concerned because you think, Oh, it's fine. It's, it's within the range. I would actually probably just get it checked out because the checking out. And here, I'm not saying we're going to try and get a diagnosis, but the checking out is just, it's, it's preventative, you know, and so it's, it's kind of almost trying to say, what I'm, I guess the message in this whole podcast is don't panic because there is a wide range of normal, but if you've got these instincts and these warning bells, then.

There's no harm. It's exactly what that pediatrician said to you. So what harm are you doing? You know, you know, and also I think you've, you really hit [00:35:00] the nail on the head around the doctor, because that was our journey with gray. We went to see a pediatrician and they were like, Oh, this doesn't look good.

We're not really sure. Like, let's see. And my husband and I were like, that's not an answer. That is absolutely not what we want to hear. And that's, so that's exactly why we did the OT and the physio. And we kind of just spread to get other people's input in. And I think that Just yeah, taking at least as a parent, if you feel like there's an alarm bell doing something is better than doing nothing, right?

It still makes you at least feel like you're, you're acting on it and trying to address something, even as you said, if there's, if there's nothing to be too alarmist on. Yeah, yeah. So, I mean, it is a very deep subject and we probably could do a whole nother session on it. But, yeah, I mean, I think, I think the overarching message that I would like to leave moms with is if there's a niggle in your mind, see to it and try and, try and, you don't have to go to a doctor, go, go and chat to an OT, [00:36:00] or physio.

 The parent sense app Tove is amazing. We've got an activity for every day and they're so carefully graded. If you follow those activities, through your baby's first year of life, I can assure you that they're will be on track because you will pick up that they're not able to do it at the right time.

 And otherwise they will actually be doing it at the right time. So, you know, those activities are hugely preventative for moms and make any, cause I know we need to wrap up any words of advice or encouragement or tips or anything that parents who are kind of maybe thinking there's something or a bit niggly, you know, can take to heart.

Yeah. So look developmentally, I would say. So, so, so let, let's say one of you that's listening is like, oh, I've just got this like sinking feeling in my stomach. So what I would do is I would take the next seven days and I would do it a full a hundred percent tech detox in your home. And I know that sounds completely obsessive, but it's [00:37:00] incredible how much has to happen.

When technology is taken away, how much time you have to spend with your child, how much you have to be on the floor, how much you have to be co regulating with them, how much language goes on. And those things, when you've actually got, when you take out all the, all the trappings of of the modern world, and you just get back down to the basics with little ones, it's often, you will either get a real sense.

Then that there is actually a problem, or you'll get a sense that, Oh my goodness, actually, we just needed to do a little bit more of this and that. And the reason it has to be seven days is it takes three days of irritability to break a habit of technology. It's, it's an exact, it's a dopamine addiction.

So you, I would definitely say get rid of technology, focus in on language and emotions for those seven days. So make eye contact, connect with their emotions, help them to self regulate. You know, give them a stimulating environment. Follow the parent sense app for seven days. And if at the end of those seven days, you can reflect and you look back and you go, you know what?

That was a great [00:38:00] week. Actually all my worries are not too, too much of a worry. We're going to go back to a balanced way of life. And we're going to have a little bit of TV for babysitting because we know that that happens, but it's going to be super limited. And, you know, we're going to just, you know, but I'm going to be a more conscious parent.

That is great. Or you might get to the end of the week and go, gosh, now that I've been really consciously involved in this process. I can see that there's something else going on and then step number two would then be to say go and go and have a chat to an OT or a physio. That would be my advice. And they will very quickly say to you, we need a PETA involved here, or we need a, a developmental neurologist who, I mean, who I think the world of, they're, they're the people, the people who really know what's going on are the developmental neurologists, which are pediatric.

Pediatricians who further specialized in neurodevelopmental, they're the people. The problem is that they're hen's teeth. You know, you can't find them. So yeah, I think that on a practical level, let's start there. Let's do that. And, and I think that moms will actually find that that practically gives them tools to be able to make decisions better.

I [00:39:00] think that's a great piece of advice. I definitely would have used that, in, on my journey. And I definitely have taken advantage of it. Luckily I have an OT down the road. So, and you know, today I'm going to say something to you that is a message to every single mom, and I've said it, if I've said it to you once, I've said it to you a hundred times, you are an incredible mother and moms.

I'm saying that to every single one of you, you know, the fact that you're listening to this, the fact that you think about it, the fact that your child is the center of your world, like they are, you are an incredible, incredible parent. And parenting is frigging hard. And, you know, and I think that's the one thing that any, no fancy app can take away, you know, nothing.

Is that just isolation that you feel? Because it is, it is a one man journey very often. You know, we love to say you're part of a village. We love to feel connected through Instagram, TikTok, whatever. The reality is that parenting is it's, it's hard and it's solo. It's, it feels very, very, very lonely at times.

I have to say, I think [00:40:00] it's, and I feel like that's not the messaging that people like to send. So you read all the books and you do all the prep and then it happens and you're like, um. Why was that not written in any of the books I've read? Exactly. Exactly. So moms, you're not alone, even though it feels solo, it feels lonely.

 And I think reaching out to us or to, you know, to other communities like this is important. Very important. I found it very helpful, without a doubt on my journey, especially on the Premi journey with Nova, listening to podcasts of. Parents who've been on the journey and had the feelings, definitely made you feel like you weren't alone in, in your thoughts and, you know, your challenges and your stress, which is great.

Yeah. It's very important. Great. Well, thank you for one. Yeah. I'm thanking you for hosting me and you can thank the moms. Thank you moms for joining us. It's been wonderful to have you. And I hope that this has been somewhat helpful, for anyone who's kind of feeling a little bit [00:41:00] anxious, on their journey.

And yeah, what we'd love from you guys is to describe, subscribe to the app, wherever you're listening or subscribe to the podcast, wherever you're listening, rates and review us. We'd really appreciate that. And, yeah, we'll see you soon. Great. Thank you so much, Tové. Cheers. Thanks to everyone who joined us.

We will see you the same time next week. Until then, download ParentSense app and take the guesswork out of parenting.

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