

From 'Be the Best' Anxiety to Trusting Your Child's Natural Learning

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SUMMARY

Sara, an architect and mother, shares her transformative journey in parenting her son, S, by shifting from a performance-driven mindset to one that embraces child-led learning. Inspired by her own upbringing, which emphasized being the best, Sara has learned to see S as her mentor, allowing him to guide his own learning experiences, which has deepened their connection and trust.

- Sara grew up in a high-pressure environment focused on achievement, leading to anxiety and a desire to avoid similar pressures for her son.*
- She discovered the concept of child-led learning through Montessori principles and sought to implement them despite challenges from preschool influences.*
- Sara emphasizes the importance of a "yes space" at home, allowing S to explore freely without constant permission-seeking.*
- She learned to support S's learning by observing his interests and facilitating explorations rather than directly teaching or providing answers.*
- The approach has fostered deeper conversations and connections, with S's curiosity often leading to meaningful family interactions.*
- Sara acknowledges ongoing challenges, particularly with documentation of learning experiences and concerns about S starting school.*
- She recognizes the value of creative problem-solving and metacognition over traditional academic skills, reshaping her priorities as a parent.*
- The journey has been fluid and organic, integrating learning into daily life, even while managing full-time work.*

Hello and welcome to the Your Parenting Mojo podcast. What would it look like if instead of trying to get our kids to be the best at everything, we actually let them be our teacher? Today I'm talking with Sara. Sara grew up in a family where the motto was to be the best at everything. And that motto existed because Sar's parents wanted the best for her. And in some ways, it was quite successful because now she's an accomplished architect. But in a lot of other ways, she struggles. And over the last year, she's realized that her 4 and a half-year-old son is showing her a different path. Based on Dr. Allison Gobnik's work, Sarah calls it S's lantern consciousness. the way he has of taking everything in at a slow pace and making connections between ideas that she never would have thought a kid this young could make. And instead of trying to rush him or push him to perform, she's actually started seeing him as her mentor. And that has changed how she moves through the world as well. Now, I know that might sound a little bit weird at first, your preschooler as your mentor, but stay with us because what Sarah's discovered about supporting S's learning has completely shifted how she thinks about education and development.

We're going to talk about what happened when Sarah stopped trying to teach Psalm, what she found when she started following his lead instead. And we'll hear about how this approach is actually supporting S's development in ways that more traditional models of teaching and learning never could. If you've ever wondered whether there's another way to think about your child's learning, one that doesn't involve so much pressure and performance, this conversation might be just what you need to hear. Hello and welcome to the Your Parenting Mojo podcast and today I'm here with guest Sara who is a parent of a young child in Vancouver I believe. So Sara, would you mind telling us just a little bit about who you are and something that's important to you?

>> Hi Jen, thank you so much for having me. Uh, I am a 38-year-old architect from Iran and I live in Vancouver, Canada on the unceded and traditional territories of the Musum, Squamish, and Solitude peoples uh with my husband and 4 and a half year-old son. And one thing that's very important for me is nature. uh all the non-human beings that exist in equilibrium on this planet if we let them.

>> If we can figure out a way to be an actual part of that. >> Exactly. >> Yes. Equilibrium. Uh cool. So, we have been working together for a little bit on supporting Psalms learning. And so, I wanted to talk with you a little bit today about how you've kind of been on this journey over the last year or so and how that's kind of unfolded for you and where you are with it right now. So, uh, I guess I'm curious about what initially drew you to the idea of interestled learning with SAM.

>> Um, I grew up, um, in a family where the motto was be the best. And, um, of course, I couldn't be the best at everything, academics, sports, music, art. So from a very early age being the best was paired with you're not good enough in my brain and my body and uh because of that I experienced high levels of anxiety uh you know from n age 9 or 10 and it only got worse as I got older and I knew I didn't want this for S. So my husband and I were fully aligned on following Psalm and his interests. Uh and I was very deep into research uh about this before I was born. My introduction to the idea of following the child was as I was researching the Montasauri method uh as I was pregnant and it resonated a lot. Uh so from day one um the ideas of freedom of movement having a yes space and interestled explorations were non-negotiables for us but there's this is a big butt. Uh we both work full-time and uh inevitably we sent S off to preschool >> and one year into preschool on top of his separation anxiety which was pretty heart heart-wrenching um he started to ask permission for things that he would never have asked permission for before and that was heartbreaking for me. So in my panic, I started to look into unschooling and supporting his learning at home. But when I realized that unschooling is not something that we can manage short term uh because of my full-time job, I knew I needed more tools uh to make up for what he's being expo exposed to at preschool and uh later on in school. Uh so that's when I discovered your learning membership. Uh and um the rest is kind of history.

>> And so I guess I'm curious, what kind of things was he asking permission to do that he wouldn't have asked for before? And why was that hard? >> So he would uh feel like doing art, but he would come and ask me, "Oh, can I grab the markers?" And that was very alarming to me because we have he has his yes space, his shelf with all of his supplies and before preschool he would just go grab whatever he wanted whenever he wanted.

So I was like, "Oh, of course you can." Uh, and in my mind I was trying to imagine what his day looks like at preschool and like the the routine and all the control. And I was like, "Oh, he's bringing that from from that environment uh that he has to check whatever he wants to do with an adult first." And um I never wanted to have that kind of relationship with with him. Um, no. The answer no for us in our home is saved for uh situations that are unsafe for him and everything else is supposed to be yes. Um, so this was like a direct clash with with our values.

>> Why why the yes? Why the automatic yes? What does that mean to you? Why is that important to you? Um I would say uh I I think the yes is tied to his innate drive and sense of autonomy. Uh so I because I recognize him as a full human being with an independent drive and separate interests from mine. I can never know um what exactly he's thinking or what goal he has. Uh so I am not qualified as a person outside of him to give him permission for what he's innately driven to do.

>> Um that's why we wanted to both my husband and I were were aligned on this. We wanted to minimize um when we say no and have a really good reason for why we do that. So everything else would be a yes. >> Wow. Okay. So I'm I'm thinking about this in the context of your experience, right? One of the first things you said about yourself is you're from Iran, right? You you're now in Canada and I know your kind of experience as an immigrant is really important to you and obviously your parents wanted the best for you. being being the best is because they wanted the best for you. And in a Montasauri school, right, I'm sure they want the best for your child. They are recognizing that a child who asks permission before using something is going to do well in school later in life, right? They're going to have a good relationship with a teacher. And so, I guess I'm curious about your experience as an immigrant and how that kind of informs the ways that you interact with SAM and the ways that you think about S's learning.

Um, I uh thought that I was very clear on my values. Um, aside from knowing that I don't want him to be the best at anything and put that pressure on him, uh, I knew that I wanted to have a simple routine with lots of free time um, and interested activities. uh until his cohort turned four and all of a sudden all the kids were enrolled in multiple activities, swim lessons, soccer, ice skating, even musical theater. Um and I found myself questioning my approach um mostly because of the uh kind of insecurity that I was feeling as an immigrant. And I would ask myself like what if these extracurricular activities are essential for his success in this society and like what if we don't sign him up and uh he's going to be at a disadvantage and it'll be all my fault.

Um so that was that was a big challenge. Um and um I considering myself as an outsider to the dominant culture in in Canada um was kind of pulling me into this spiral of like just constantly questioning myself and like losing sight of what's important. Um and the membership actually kind of saved me from that. Um, so I I brought it up uh during a coaching call and you told me something that has become sort of a compass for me in in situations like this because they keep coming up. Um, you asked who is the child in front of you? Um, and I've been asking myself that every time that I find myself questioning my values. Uh, you also said what are your core values?

So like always coming back to that to the to the core values. And this freed me from all the judgment that I had about myself as an immigrant and um those ideas of being an outsider and not understanding what s needs to

thrive uh independently in this society. Um and I expect this to come up. Uh you you you told me too that you know everyone has these challenges regardless of being an immigrant or not. Uh but now I feel equipped that you know I have this compass. I can I I know what I have to come back to.

>> And what does who is the child in front of you mean to you? Why did that resonate so much? >> It brings me to that idea of psalm as a complete person that's outside of me. So, and because that was because I had such a um deep understanding of that from the time that I was pregnant with him and like the time that he was born. Um I can fall back on that because I know that as a truth that he's a he's an independent and separate person.

>> Yeah. Yeah. It's been core to your values for so long. And ultimately, I think all all of us what we want is to be seen and known and understood and loved for who we really are, right? And that was something your parents had a hard time with because they wanted you to be the best so that you could succeed in life. And that meant not accepting you for who you are inherently because you had to be a better version of yourself. And you're really seeing S and and who he is as a person, it seems to me. So I know that one of the things that we have talked about is how the the idea of being the best has led to a degree of perfectionism in you and I'm wondering if you can tell us a little bit about how that has shown up in yourself and also in your relationship with Psalm as well.

>> Um yeah I I was convinced that setting impossible expectations and standard for myself was what got me to where I am now. had actually worked pretty well for me. >> You're pretty accomplished, right? >> Yeah. Um, but I suffer from the impact it has on my well-being and I uh I acknowledge that and I feel it in my body. Um, so I knew that I don't want to pass on my perfectionism down to some.

Um, and I I would consciously never correct any imperfections in his work. Um, you know, a crooked sticker really bothers me, but I try to hide it as best as I can because I see that he couldn't care less. Um, I didn't realize what a strong grip perfectionism has on me until uh during one of the coaching calls for the learning membership. I was telling you about how our learning explorations with some are not very creative. They're not good enough.

They're not thorough enough or how I'm not taking advantage of all the learning opportunities that present themselves. Um, and you identified this as uh you identified this judgment that I have about our uh learning with Psalm as a manifestation of my perfectionism. And I had never thought about it that way. Uh so that resonated so much and uh it kind of it alleviated all the anxiety and guilt that I was feeling in supporting Psalms learning um because it's such a big part of my personality at this point um after all those years of like building up on it. Um I obviously like struggle uh with it but I'm aware of it and um something that's helped me a lot through the learning membership is understanding how everything that S does based on his own interest uh he's learning a lot through it regardless of how I kind of guide uh the exploration.

around it. So every time I hear that perfectionist in my brain, I'm like, breathe. That's your perfectionism talking. Mhm. >> I I don't want you to sort of sense any pressure to answer this in a certain way, but I'm wondering if if being more aware of your perfectionism in yourself, right? Aside from Psalm, separating Psalm

for a moment, if being more aware of that has supported you in any way, are you able to kind of release it a little bit now that you're more aware that it's there or does it not work like that at all for you?

I would say at this point it's more of a conscious effort, but it's definitely a step forward from how I used to be before. Uh so I don't beat myself up as much. um I have to consciously identify it and make an effort not to beat myself up. But to me that's a step towards ultimately kind of internalizing that um that sense of ease and uh self-acceptance uh and hopefully at some point um getting rid of the perfectionism altogether.

Uh so yeah, big big steps towards it. I feel um hopeful. >> Wow, that's uh not a bad spot to be feeling hopeful on a on a topic that has impacted you so much for so many years. So awesome. Thank you for sharing that. And so yeah, so it's I I mean I've really seen a shift in you over the last year or so. And it is sort of a cyclical thing I think, isn't it? Right.

Sometimes there's a you you get yourself into a little bit of a hole and then we have a conversation on a coaching call and then you're like okay okay I can I can relax again and then a month later it might be a little bit of a different issue and um but overall what I see is the the holes are getting less deep. >> Yeah. And so I am curious I guess from your perspective what does it look like in terms of how your confidence has evolved over the last months and uh from you know from that journey of where you started to where you are now.

Um initially when I um started the learning membership I uh didn't know how learning happens. Um, and I don't mean knowledge accumulation by memorization, which is mostly how I was schooled, but deep interested place-based wholebodied learning that can only happen when there is an internal drive as opposed to external pressure.

Um but kind of diving into the learning membership, I felt uh pretty overwhelmed with the idea of learning explorations and kind of just a wrapping my head around um what my role is and how I can support son's learning. >> Okay. I wonder if we can pause just there for a moment because I think most most parents might be like what's a learning exploration? So from your perspective, what is a learning exploration? From my perspective, a learning exploration is an uh exploration that starts with uh an interest or a question in my child or from my child. Um and in kind of forming the learning exploration, I have a uh support role where uh I scaffold uh him by uh maybe asking some questions or um throwing out some ideas uh without providing him with the answer if I know it. um and uh if I don't which is even better uh to kind of become his sounding board and um guide him to opportunities to find answers to his questions or explore his ideas and by that I mean you know a 4 and 1/2 year-old uh might not be aware that there's a museum where there are experts that he can ask uh or there's uh you know a certain um park nearby where he could observe the phenomenon that he's interested in. So my my role as um the adult is to kind of just make sure he's aware of the opportunities and constantly gauging his interest and exploring further as opposed to inserting my own curiosity and interest. Um, and by providing that opportunity, uh, letting him explore as much and as deeply as he can, um, he may get to the answer, he may not, he may get to the correct answer, he may not, and that's totally okay. It's all in the process. And within the learning exploration, there's um a a step that's the documentation of it. uh and that provides him uh for something to go back to uh as he grows up and potentially further explores that topic.

>> Awesome. Thank you. And Okay. So, so initially coming into the idea of learning exploration was a little bit overwhelming. How how >> uh yes. Uh it it took me a few weeks uh to um kind of understand what my role is. And um what was super helpful was uh that you you you gave us this um very simple or seemingly simple idea of just start by not giving him the answer and the next steps will follow but the very first step is that uh so I was like okay I don't have to understand like the philosophy of learning um I can just start with this and at first I had to make a conscious decision to say something like, "Hm, I wonder why. Um, what do you think?" Or, "Um, let's head to the library and see if we can find a book about this." And now, uh, almost a year in, uh, that's just second nature.

Um, and what's beautiful to me is that um, not giving him the answer doesn't just apply to questions that he asks and his curiosities, but it also applies to our problem solving conversations. So when we have an issue um uh I just ideate with him and um he's the one that generates the solution sometimes. So it all ties together really nicely and to me uh it's all the same idea.

>> Um so then then I start to get better at observing him in his play to like be able to uh guide his learning explorations better. uh you know noticing themes uh that recur in his play and providing opportunities for him to further explore either through books or adventures mostly. Um, one example that I really loved, um, was, uh, when they had talked about space exploration at preschool, uh, at like a very surface level, but I noticed that his pretend play was with astronauts for like days and days. Um, so I identified that as something that he's definitely curious about. So, I got him a bunch of books uh about moon landings uh with photos of the astronauts and the Apollos uh especially Apollo 11 and Saturn 5. Uh and I was actually uh kind of a space nerd when I was in high school. So, this was um kind of tricky for me to like not like babble on about like all the cool things um that I know and I'm interested in and just like get the book and look through it together and see what he's interested in.

And uh he was very interested in the people. So, he asked about the astronauts. Um and I knew that my mom had memories of of the moon landing. So, uh, we talked to my mom and, uh, she told Som the names of the astronauts, uh, and for weeks from that day, uh, the characters in his play were Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins. Like these three names, like he was talking about them all the time. And that was just so beautiful to me. Like even now that I'm talking about it, I'm getting goosebumps because it was such a deep um such such a meaningful experience for us just as a family like including my mom.

>> Yeah. >> Um and >> I wonder if pause there and just ask uh how how different was that from what you were doing before we started working together? Um, you kind of talk through the idea of pausing, of not giving the answer, of seeing the child's interests and not answering all of their questions, but just providing, you know, a little bit of an extra resource and seeing where their interest goes. How does that compare to what you were doing before? How was it different?

>> I love that question. So before I would almost feel pressured to give him the answer on the spot as if like I have to know as the parent and that feeling is completely gone like I don't I don't deal with that at all anymore. Uh which is very freeing I might add. Uh and the next thing I know I would do is I would grab all the books and

I would sit with him and walk through it in the right sequence. I would start with, you know, the cold war and how the like the space race and uh everything that led to the moon landing with the dogs and the monkeys and um like you know how the how Saturn 5 works and how the Apollo came back. Uh I would 100% do that. Whereas this time around um I didn't I was able to not insert any of that. I would totally have lost him um had I done that. Uh and um it wouldn't have nearly been as as beautiful and as meaningful and as as engaging for all of us.

>> Yeah. Yeah. I think that's really important. And so for folks who are listening and who are wondering, well, how do I know which one of these right wait what I'm doing right now? If you find yourself consciously teaching your child and it's such a temptation when you know about the topic, which is why we advise when you're getting started with this to choose something for your first learning exploration that you know nothing about because then that temptation is gone. If you find yourself teaching and if you see your kid's eyes glazing over, maybe they walk away, they turn away, right? They are completely disengaging, then it's become your project, right? It's become your thing to teach them. And when you see them continually, oh, tell me more about this, tell me more about that. What do you think about that? What do you remember about that? That's how you know they're engaged, right? And what I'm hearing there from Psalm is this really deep relationship building, connecting experience that really kind of doesn't rely on a whole history of space when the thing that he's interested in is the astronauts themselves, right? you can hone right in on the piece that he's interested in and he may come back around and be like, "Hey, I wonder what did lead to, you know, how did those people get there? Why those people? Uh what kind of training did they have?"

Right? And and the questions may follow from there or not. I know he's also really interested in construction vehicles. That might be the topic of the next exploration. >> So, and and I think all of that being okay. And you said something I think is really important a little while ago, right? He might get to the answer, he might not. re why why is not getting to the answer okay in your world of you you've got to be the best right or or reacting to you've got to be the best how can you be okay with he he comes to the wrong answer tell me more about that >> uh I would say that is also something that I learned from the membership uh I would definitely have been u nervous about giving him the wrong answer or him not knowing the answer before um I for me uh it's all in in the process. So through the membership we learn about how learning happens and how uh a child uh observes patterns um and uh kind of theorizes and extrapolates based on those patterns uh and kind of applies what he's observed before to new things that he uh sees out in the world.

So um it's such an iterative process for them that um it's inherently it inherently corrects itself uh because of their innate drive to learn about how the world works. Like that's just kind of built into humans uh in our DNA to be able to to survive uh and and and and evolve. So really believing in that um has helped me to set aside my perfectionism in the way uh S is learning about the world and uh it it has it has also made me hyper aware to this this iterative process that he does. So every time that he observes something new uh and I see that he's uh kind of applying what he already knows to this new thing. Like an example to clarify this is the other day we were um biking and uh we heard seagulls and they sounded very distressed to me and I'm really interested in birds. So whenever I I observe something about birds I let them know. Uh, so I was like, "This seagull seems sounds really distressed.

I wonder what's going on with him." So we looked up and there was a drone. Um, and two seagulls were like really bothered by it. And I pointed the drone out to him because I knew he hadn't seen one before. I was like, "Oh, there's a drone." And they're bothered by that. And Tom asked, "What's a drone?" Um, and uh, this was a situation where uh, I knew that if I don't tell him what a drone is, um, he'll he's going to get frustrated and confused. Uh, so really understanding like when is the time that I give him like a a bit of a um, pointer or like a little bit of knowledge so he can build on that. So I was like, "Yeah, that a drone is um you know, such and such and you you fly it with like someone controls it remotely." And he was like, "Oh, uh just like my control helicopter." Uh I know how they fly it.

They would put it on level ground. Uh they would step back, they would grab the controller, and by using the the buttons uh on the controller, they would fly it, and whenever they want, they would bring it back down. Um, so he was like talking about that for 15 minutes and like imagining how a drone functions. Uh, and I'm like this is exactly it. Like he has a control helicopter. He knows how he can apply what he already knows to something new.

So it's like I'm constantly validated and like the approach in the learning membership is continually verified through our lived experience. um where I I know that my like my role keeps like fading the background because the wheels in his brain are turning independently. >> Yeah. Yeah. And and just to be clear, right, we're not talking about well, I'm never going to answer my kid's question again. >> Exactly. >> And I what you what you did here was you um you recognized that this was going to be an incident where he didn't have a lot of of relevant knowledge, right?

He'd never seen a drone before. A drone is one of those things kind of hard to conceive of if you don't have the knowledge. And I'm wondering if you forgot about his helicopter, the thing that that he has. And so you didn't make necessarily make that. >> Yeah. And so um so potentially, right, if you remember, you could say something like, "Hey, have you ever seen anything that flies like that before?" Right? And and then maybe he would make the connection himself. But there are plenty of plenty of times when the most appropriate thing to do is to provide that next step, right? Just that small next step and then to see where that goes. And yeah, the connections that he immediately drew. I mean, would I know how to fly a drone the first time I saw it? Probably not. And yeah, so much comes from uh seeing what knowledge does my child already have and how how can I provide just the next step so that he's not feeling frustrated by a piece of missing information and that he does he have that sort of framework that scaffolding to hang a new piece of knowledge on? If he doesn't, I'm going to give him a little more of that, right? I'm going to tell him a bit more of the answer. If he does and I remember, I'm going to back off a little bit and say, "What do we already know about things that you can fly and control?" Right? Because that doesn't look like a, you know, a naturally occurring thing up there in the sky.

So, that's so awesome. Thank you for sharing that. Um, and I guess I I'm wondering, are there other sort of things that maybe didn't seem like learning explorations at the time or, you know, memorable explorations that you've done that you you would like to share? Um there's one that happened recently that I really loved um mostly because uh of the overall context. So we um it it this example involves uh a package of sliced cheese. Uh we were driving home from grocery shopping after a long day for me and for Som. He was exhausted and

irritable from a full day at preschool.

and uh he was snacking on the sliced cheese um that we had just bought from the store right out of the package. Uh I asked him not to tear the realable cover off uh so the cheese doesn't go dry. So I I gave him the reason um for why I'm asking him this. Uh but when we got home, I noticed that he had torn off the realable cover. And I understand like it's it's annoying like it it keeps flapping over so it's hard to grab the cheese when the cover is there. So I I get why he did it. Um but I had specifically asked him not to and you know I was tired. I got pretty annoyed and I launched into expressing my frustration but instantly realized uh that this is a great problem solving opportunity. Uh so I changed my tone kind of halfway. Uh, I started by, "Summy, uh, I told you not to tear it off. Uh, but you did." And then paused for a millisecond and I went, "What can we do so the cheese doesn't go dry?" And Som, he had like fully sensed the frustration of the half um, in the first half of my sentence. He said, "I don't know." Um, so I persisted gently and I said, "I wonder what we could do so the cheese won't go dry." And he instantly said, "Um, we could put it in a Ziploc bag." And, uh, you know, that turned what could be a very unpleasant situation for both of us into more of a brain building exercise. Um, and I think all of that is because um, of the skills that I've learned in this past year about identifying opportunities for more learning based on just and it just happened over time like so organically and naturally like I I just without trying too hard um, I can identify opportunities for for learning and um uh even if I'm now even if I'm frustrated or like a little bit overwhelmed, I can still kind of focus enough to like turn it around. And that was that was very meaningful to me.

>> Thank you for sharing that. And I guess I'm also wondering, are there areas where S's thinking has surprised you? It seems as though that whole interaction was surprising to you. Are there areas where the idea or the the direction that some takes in exploration has been really surprising to you? >> Oh, that never ceases to uh amaze me. Um with almost everything that that we do um because he has equal space to express his ideas.

um there's always something that I hadn't noticed or hadn't thought about and really knowing to knowing how to hear that um and build on that as opposed to build on what I know myself u provides even more opportunity for for him to kind of theorize and and notice and that just like kind of um it it just um scales up every time. Like there's it just seems to be like there's infinite room uh for uh his thought processes and ideas to to grow. Um and and that is definitely something that I experience in like every question that he asks just on a daily basis.

>> Can you give us an example? um an example. So he is very interested in um construction vehicles and um there's lots of construction going on uh around where we live. Um so he's noticed different ways in which different uh construction vehicles and equipment function. So, he's seen a tracked excavator and how it has to be transported on a huge flatbed truck just to the site. They won't just roll on asphalt, but he's also seen uh dump trucks that roll on tires and they go on roads. He's also seen loaders. So, there was this one time that uh we saw a bunch of dump trucks uh lining up um kind of further away from a construction site waiting for their turn to like get to the site and um get filled and there was a track digger or tracked excavator uh working on the site.

So, he saw the excavator first and then he saw the lineup of the dump trucks like further out. And at first he was like, "Oh, these are waiting to get filled by the excavator." Um, and all I did was like, "Oh, yeah. I I see them too.

That's interesting." And then he said, "Um, I guess the excavator would have to grab the dirt and roll down to them uh to fill them up." And I was like, "Oh, I wonder if that's going to be how it works." Uh and then he remembered that he had seen how tracked excavators don't roll on roads. Uh and he said, "Oh, but tracked excavators are so slow and they uh leave marks on the asphalt and they make a really screechy sound. Um, I guess a backhoe loader um that rolls on wheels would have to feel fill these up. And right around then, the lineup of the dump truck starts to move. So, we didn't kind of establish that, oh, these guys are going to roll down to the site.

They're just waiting here. But it doesn't matter. Like the next time he sees this, he's going to make the connection and that's totally fine. >> Mhm. Yeah. And what a lot of observation is happening there and connections with things he's previously observed, right? And we know we think that young kids, oh, they're just playing, right? Oh, they're, you know, they're they're not really doing anything super deep as they are uh going through their lives. And what you're starting to notice is, yeah, this these these are connections that are coming across multiple conversations that we've had, multiple observations that we've had of construction sites. And he's putting it all together into this idea of how it works. And you made a hypothesis essentially, and you didn't get a chance to test the hypothesis that particular time, but next time you see a construction site, you're going to be able to uh to see if his theory is correct. And I mean, scientific method, anyone?

right? That's essentially what we're doing. So, um, thank you. Thanks. Thanks for those examples because I think it so illustrates the capabilities that our kids have if we can learn to see them, right? And if we can learn to be that person who provides just a little bit of support and you know what, do you have expertise in dump trucks? I know you're an architect, so you have you have some tangential expertise, but do you have any specific knowledge of how this stuff works?

>> No. And that's totally fine. >> Yeah. And you didn't need any because all you were doing is basically, you know, providing a little prod, right? Oh, I I wonder >> I wonder if that is how that works, right? And and that's that is such a powerful thing to say to a young child. It conveys that you're interested, that you're right there with them in that engagement, that you're you're ready to support them, and the ball is in their court.

>> Um, and so I wonder um if there are places you you've talked a lot about things that have have gone really well. I'm wondering, are there still places that feel uneasy, stuck, more difficult that you would like to uh sort of share and um share some thoughts on? Um I would say uh documentation uh is still um a challenge. It's been a challenge throughout this past year. Um and it remains a challenge mostly because uh most of our learning explorations were on the go or in the car uh or out in nature and and the things that I want to capture on paper uh so that it's accessible to him. uh I don't seem to find a system to consistently do that.

Um so I have yet to figure that out. Um and the community uh is always very helpful uh with these kinds of issues. Uh all the members uh everyone has uh somewhat somewhat of a different process. Um so I think for me it's just a matter of um running some ideas by the community and see what they have done that has worked for them.

Um and uh the other kind of struggle is um the idea around school. So Sam is starting school in about a year and um I'm very nervous about that. It's been a pretty emotional struggle. Um, but my plan so right now is to uh just try and build on my own skills uh for supporting his learning at home. Uh while we uh we are still thinking that he will just go to school um during the day.

Uh and our role um kind of unfolds in the afternoon, evening, and the weekends. And um you know that that's okay. That's what we have to work with. And um um there's quite a bit that we can do. Um but yeah, that's um these are kind of the two remaining sticky points for me. >> Yeah. Yeah. Uh documentation I think is is always sort of an ongoing challenge for me as well.

For a long time I would leave Oh. Oh yes, absolutely. Um, for a long time I would leave the learning journal open on the table and then uh that worked really well when Caris would sit at the end of the table and we so we would kind of sit in a triangle and the whole other half of the table was kind of open and she decided she wanted to sit next to me and so now the two of us are on one side and there's not enough space on the end of the table.

So, uh, so that has, you know, gone by the wayside a little bit. And I guess what what I usually end up doing is whenever we go for some sort of car ride where I'm not driving, then I will bring the last completed page of the learning journal so I remember what I wrote about and a couple of blank pages and something hard to rest on. And of course, my handwriting is atrocious, but I, you know, it it gets it out. and um and then I when my husband prints the photographs from whatever we're doing, I'll add some notes on those pages as well. So yeah, so it's very much in flux and based on you know what's what's happening in life at the moment for me too. So I hope that gives you some sort of sense of uh it'll be okay.

>> Definitely does. Yes. Thank you. >> And then I guess I'm curious, we've talked about school a number of times and I'm not sure where you are right now. Are are you deciding to go to a like a state school at the moment? Is that the current the current decision? >> Uh no. So after months of struggle, >> we decided to sign him up um uh for a nature school. Uh so they spend half >> an hour away.

>> Yes, that one. Yes. So they they spent half the day in in the forest and half indoors. We're blessed with lots of forests around the greater Vancouver area, but we are moving this summer. >> Oh, you are? Okay. >> Yes. Um and this being closer to the school is um definitely one of the reasons for the move. Um and yeah, we're we're gonna start with that school and and see how we how it goes. >> Okay. Wow, that is huge.

>> So I when when is all that happening? Are you moving before school starts or after? >> Well, he he's not starting school till 2026. Uh so we're moving um in about a month. >> Wow. and uh yeah, we'll we'll have time to, you know, kind of settle in um and then he'll start school next September. >> Okay. And I know that one of the factors involved in this decision is right now you're super close to your parents, right? And so uh how did that that part of the decision take place? Uh yeah, there will definitely be uh a kind of a 50minute uh drive distance uh between us, but um uh you know going back to the to those values um uh has been the guiding post um and what compromise is more acceptable. Uh so um I wouldn't be surprised if they moved as well to be closer. Um but uh that is for them to decide. Uh for now uh the decision that works for us uh everything

considered um is to to move a little bit further away.

>> Okay. And so I guess I'm also curious I mean you're talking about family relationships here. How this has affected right this this approach to learning has affected your relationship with Psalm if at all right. What would you what would you observe about that? it has uh affected the quality of of our connection a lot. Um and I think it goes back to how he now knows that I really deeply respect his ideas and interests and this brings a whole other level of trust and um like in our relationship and also depth to our conversations.

Um it because of this approach it it it we're both at the same level in every way. um when there's a question or curiosity or in any given situation and as much as I scaffold him sometimes uh I consider him as my mentor and the way that and the way to be in the world um just because of the way he's he exists and the way with his lantern consciousness he's like taking everything in at a slow pace and and I definitely consider consider him a mentor for me in that sense. Um so yeah that the the depth of the connection that we have uh built through these explorations together um has kind of taken our our connection and attachment to to a whole other level.

>> And so just to be crystal clear on something that has sort of we've we've um touched on a number of times, you work >> Yes. I work full-time. Yeah. >> Okay. And so obviously I can hear the con the conversation about the construction vehicles is probably happening on your way to drop off somewhere, right? So how does this fit into a working full-time schedule? Aside from the documentation piece, uh everything else um as soon as like things clicked in my brain in terms of my role and the process, everything just happens so organically like I don't have to try uh to accomplish anything. It's just in every little interaction, in every place that we go, be it our commute to preschool in the car or a weekend kind of nature adventure. Um, it it's it's really daytoday. It's very easy, very fluid, >> effortless.

>> Wow. >> Awesome. that I think that will be helpful for folks who are thinking about how they can possibly make it work, right, with a full, you know, two parents who are working full-time and a kid who's in a in a preschool environment, too. So, I guess I'm I'm curious as you think about the journey you've been on over the last almost year or so, and you think about how, you know, how you've grown as well as you've learned to support Psalms learning. Um, and you think about the things that you were worried about a year ago. I'm wondering is there a piece of advice if you look back to where you were a year ago that from from your position today that you would offer year ago. Sara I would tell her that uh you don't know yet what is actually most important. A year ago I thought what's most important is reading, writing and arithmetic.

Um, now I truly believe that the most important skills that SAM can learn are creative problem solving and metacognition. And this is something that I learned through the membership. Um, and I know that I can support the development of these skills in him just by quietly observing, giving him time and space, being respectful to him and his interests, and ultimately scaffolding.

Um, and I know if Sar a year ago knew this, uh, she would be way less nervous. But hindsight, >> it's a thing. It's a thing. Thank you so much for being here with us and sharing something about your learning and growth and development and Sam's learning and growth and development and the growth and development in your

relationship as well. I'm so grateful to you, Sarah.

>> Thank you for having me.