

Spending too much time at work when the children were young is a parent's biggest regret

- **Two thirds admit they would do things differently if they could have the time again**

By Daily Mail Reporter

Spending too much time at work is the biggest regret parents have about their children's early years, according to a study.

It found more than three quarters have at least one thing they regret doing - or not doing - during this period. And two thirds admit they would do things differently if they could have the time again

Spending too much time at work is the biggest regret parents have about their children's early years

Almost six in ten with more than one child said they had changed their approach with their second child to make sure they did not end up with the same regrets.

More than a quarter had given advice to friends after they had children, so they didn't feel the same way.

Seven out of ten felt they had taken their youngster's childhood for granted. More than two thirds said it was easy to forget they would not be young forever.

In addition to working too hard, the top five regrets included worrying too much about things that did not really matter, not playing with the children more, not going on more holidays and not taking enough photos.

More than half of parents said they regretted not having more quality time with their children when they were younger.

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The survey of 2,000 parents found 63 per cent wish they had done more activities with their child.

Lauren Revell, from Huggies Little Swimmers, which commissioned the research, said: 'Things can seem simpler with hindsight, and it seems you definitely live and learn when you're a parent.

'When your little ones are young, it's easy to imagine your baby being that age forever. It's only a few years down the line, as your children are getting older, that you really start to look back and wish you had done some things differently.

'When it comes to parenting, many mums and dads wish they could spend a little more quality time with their little ones, but given the pressures of daily life sometimes these opportunities can be lost.

'Lots of parents have regrets because it's very easy to look backwards - that being said, it's never too late to change those - whether it's spending more time with your children, going on family holidays or taking your little one swimming.'

The study revealed more than three quarters of parents have at least one thing they regret doing, or not doing, during their child's first few years.

And two thirds admit they would do things different if they could relive the period again.

Spending too much time at work was the biggest regret, followed by worrying too much about the little things which didn't really matter.

Not playing with them enough, not going on more family holidays and not taking enough photos over the years completed the top five.



Quality time: Not reading enough at bedtime was another chief regret

More than half of parents also said they regret not having more quality time with their children when they were younger.

And 63 per cent of parents wish they did more activities with their child, such as teaching them to swim or playing a sport.

Other regrets include not going on once in a lifetime holidays like Disneyworld or Lapland, missing milestones like their first steps or words and waiting too long before teaching them to swim.

Researchers revealed that 46 per cent of parents have regrets because they have realised they will never get those early years back, while 18 per cent worry their child's life might have been affected by something they did or didn't do. A quarter also worry that their youngster's childhood wasn't as fun as it could have been and 17 per cent said they didn't enjoy their child's early years as much as they should have.

Almost six in ten of those parents who have had more than one child also admitted they did things differently with their second child to make sure they didn't end up with the same regrets.

And more than a quarter admit they have given advice to friends after they had children, so they didn't feel the same way.

THE TOP REGRETS FROM PARENTS

- Working too much
- Worrying too much about the little things that didn't really matter
- Not playing with them more
- Not going on more holidays
- Spending too much time away from them
- Not taking them on 'big' holidays such as Disneyland
- Not encouraging them to take up a hobby/more hobbies
- Not having a shared hobby
- Not reading enough to them at bedtime
- Spending too much time worrying about keeping the house clean
- Not taking them swimming more often
- Not letting them take part in messy activities more often
- Not teaching them to swim earlier
- Not seeing/being at some of the milestones in their life
- Being too over-protective
- Always waiting for the next milestone instead of enjoying the current one
- Not enjoying days out more