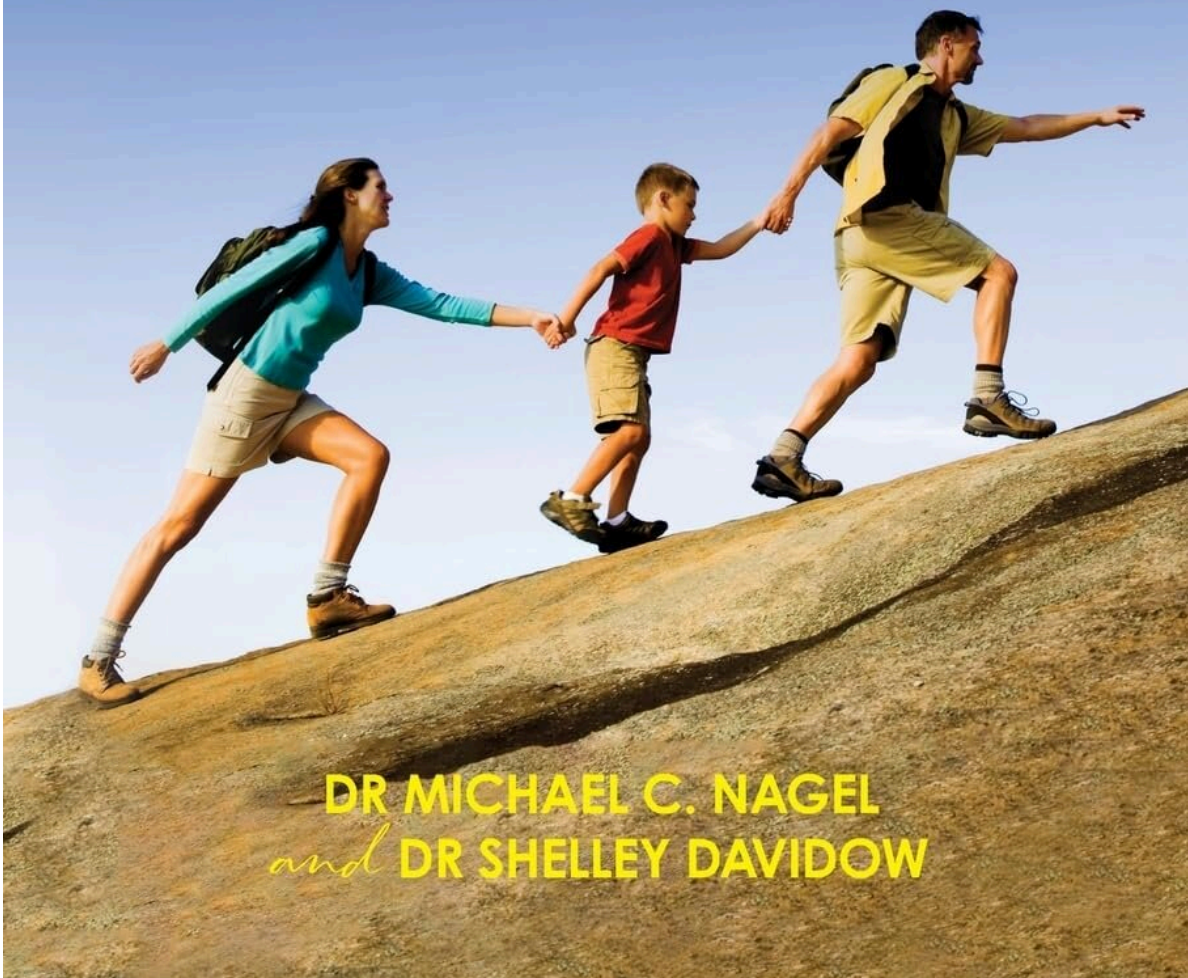


Stop trying to raise the perfect child, says new parenting book

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Grounded

The off-road guide to parenting
in an unstable world



DR MICHAEL C. NAGEL
and DR SHELLEY DAVIDOW

Credit: Amba Press

Two University of the Sunshine education experts are calling for more parents to "ground" their children—but not as punishment for misdeeds.

UniSC Associate Professor Dr. Mike Nagel and Dr. Shelley Davidow's new book "Grounded: The off-road guide to parenting in an unstable world" aims to steer parents out of the stress of years of pandemic panic—and step into a more balanced family reality in 2024.

Released today, it outlines developmental essentials that allow children to experience a grounded childhood that sets them up to be resilient, balanced, empathetic adults.

"As parents, we can do a lot to mitigate stress in their lives—but we also need to learn to allow our kids to fall and get back up again on their own," Dr. Davidow said.

"They need us to show them that life is a rich and complex up-and-down journey, not a singular trajectory towards some imaginary finish line."

Dr. Nagel said the book drew on the authors' collective decades of research, parenting and insights.

"We offer parents a guide to protecting childhood and supporting children's developing nervous systems while also taking care of their own," he said.

"Fulfilling such a goal is not only good for the children—from toddlers

to teens—but also good for the parents.

"There are many practical ways to minimize the effects of anxiety and support a child's cognitive, emotional and physiological development, at home, at school and out in the world."

Dr. Nagel said [daily life](#) felt more frightening for many families since the spread of COVID-19, with parents now more worried and protective of their children compared to previous generations.

"However, we have to let children just be children so they can enjoy childhood and become happy, healthy, resilient adults," he said.

"We are not suggesting filling the lives of children with [extracurricular activities](#) to somehow build a vast array of capacities that might normally unfold if allowed to do so on their own.

"Instead, we contend that much of what we need to do is well understood in the research literature and through the experiences of past generations of parents."

Dr. Davidow called for families to stay grounded in the simple things.

"Things like just playing, being in nature, baking, making stuff, or allowing kids to be bored may be forgotten as essential elements of growing up if parents get hijacked by the notion of raising the perfect child," she said.

"Academic success in [primary school](#) is not the predictor of a happy, healthy, wealthy life later."

More information: Grounded: The off-road guide to parenting in an unstable world. ambapress.com.au/products/grounded

Provided by University of the Sunshine Coast

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