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BEFORE I BECAME a parent, I had a fantasy vision of what it would be like. (I bet you did too.) But the picture in my dreams was specific: It centered on an ivory glider in the nursery, where I'd read books to my baby, nurse him to sleep, and soak up hours of new-mom bliss.

When I got pregnant, the glider was my first purchase. I found it on a message board for used baby gear and picked it up from a family across town the very next day. Two exhausted parents greeted my husband and me at the door. The chair was dirty—*three kids dirty*—and the older ones were using the cushion as a slide. In the halo of first-pregnancy elation, I didn't register this scene as even remotely relevant to me. When Joey was born four months later, I rocked him in the now-clean glider and cried happy, hormonal tears.

Fast-forward almost six years and another kid, and it's clear I should have paid closer attention that day.

The glider now sits in the corner of a cozy bedroom that Joey, 5, and my younger son, Gabriel, 2, share. During the day, it's a base for blanket forts, dinosaur battles, and improvisational gymnastics. At night, it has a different life. After toothbrushing, books, and bonus books comes the command from my eldest: "Mama, sit in chair." "Chair! Chair!" his brother echoes.

Yes, the glider of my dreams has become my bedtime



Dreaming Big With Small Children

prison. As someone who reads parenting advice for a living, I know sitting in that chair while my sons fall asleep is antithetical to good sleep hygiene. But sometimes knowing is not enough, and some nights (okay, all nights), little boys want their mommy nearby. The chair and I have a love-hate relationship if ever there was one.

A few weeks ago, in a career moment almost too surreal



The glider comforted both of us in the early days.

for my own imagination, I learned that I would be the next editor-in-chief of this illustrious magazine. I had to keep the news a secret for 24 hours. I rushed home, eager to put my boys to bed and begin to plan the next issue. Instead, I spent the whole evening sitting in the glider.

"Mommy got a big new job," I told Joey as I smoothed his hair for the 15th time.

"Mama?" he answered. "Sit in chair."

As the new editor-in-chief, I have expectant-mother-level dreams for *Parents*. I want to help my fellow moms and dads be more open and honest. In these pages, I want you to find the advice you need at the moment you need it so you can gain confidence, let go of guilt, and nurture your own inner life. I hope that every

issue reminds you about what matters most and gives you a moment to take a breath. Lots of breaths. In and out.

So I'll start with a nice big exhale: This year, I'm vowing to put less pressure on myself. I've got two kids I swoon over like a crazed fan, so I won't be able to moderate every buzzy panel or spend my Saturdays tweeting parenting content. Often I'll need to sit in the glider or on the floor of our playroom, or hide in my closet while one of my boys throws a fit outside it. My kids have their own goals—potty training, learning to read, and much more—and I want to be there as they make it all happen. Of course, with a job like this, there will also be moments that I'll miss, and dates I'll mix up, badly. I will forgive myself for all of this.

I hope you'll join me. Dream big for yourself, your family, and maybe your career and community too. (Our Life section, starting on page 75, is full of smart inspiration.) But if a whiny child or an impossible bedtime thwarts your plans, know that the editor of *Parents* is right there with you, scrolling her phone in the dark, trying to remind herself that all children fall asleep eventually.

Julia

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Scan this code with your phone's camera to see me juggle making a magazine with being a mother (no app needed).