

Elena Carlberg is a Katy mom to 11 children and married to her sweetheart, David

Arya,
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Adrian,
4

Addison,
6

SENSATIONAL
Katy
Women

SUPERMOM ELENA CARLBERG

Katy mom of 11 children shares 11 tips on family management

Elena Carlberg and her husband David have been best friends since they met over 20 years ago when she was just 18. Today, she's mom to their 11 biological children and counting her blessings one by one.

Katy Magazine caught up with Elena to compile some of her best advice for other Katy supermoms.

*Written by Kennan Buckner
Photography by Irina Kendrick*

Abigail,
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Ashton,
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Adam,
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Andrew,
11

Alec,
13

Aidan,
15

1. Less is More

Since organization has never been one of Elena's strengths, she relies on minimalism to keep things running smoothly. "I have 13 of everything in the cupboard," she says. "Thirteen white plates, 13 white bowls, and 13 cups." And in her hall closet, there are 13 towels. "Each child has enough clothes for two weeks' worth of school, and that's all," she says.

2. Have Humor

Elena is always making her family laugh; whether it's by talking in her silly Marilyn Monroe voice or encouraging Arya to use her English accent. "I don't know if I'm funny, or if my husband and kids are just easily amused," she laughs.

3. Do Something for Yourself

Being a mom doesn't usually lend itself to time alone. Her guilty pleasure is recording episodes of *The Bold and the Beautiful* and binge-watching them later. She also plays bunco and has joined her mom in her home décor business. She adds, "I spend a few hours a night designing items after the kids go to bed."

4. Stay Calm

Elena describes herself as calm, but not quiet. The couple's laid-back style reflects in their children's natures, too. "People are usually shocked at how well-behaved our children are, and we quite often get complimented on it."

5. Work as a Team

When it comes to the nighttime routine, they divide and conquer. "David and I tackle it together and high-five each other when they're finally all in bed. It's like completing a marathon," she says. Her husband's support doesn't end there. "When I'm having a rough day, I can always count on him to try to make me feel better," she adds.

6. Get a Support System

While she would tell her younger self to accept advice, she says not to take

to heart every opinion. Elena finds balance by getting support from those who matter most. "I couldn't do it without my family - especially my mom," she says. "She's been through this journey with me every step of the way."

7. Plan Ahead for Meals

"We order our groceries online and use the pick-up service. This new option has been life-changing for us," she says. Every night's dinner has a theme. Monday might be breakfast for dinner and Tuesday is Italian night. The following week, they just change up the menu items but still follow the theme.

8. Everybody Helps

With more kids come more messes, but also more help. Alec and Aidan do laundry and take out the trash. Andrew and Abby are the sweepers, Adam is the duster, and Ashton cleans counters. Addison and Adrian are in charge of getting everything off the floor. "Annie keeps an eye out for me, ensuring everyone is doing their job properly," says Elena. Annie, who has cerebral palsy, is also in charge of their music and the family agrees that she has amazing taste. They often listen to John Williams, The Beatles, or Prince.

9. Celebrate Victories

"There's no such thing as a little victory in this house," Elena says. "Anything that was achieved through hard work gets met with a huge cheering section." Last year, Andrew came in last place in a race during field day. This year David trained with him, and he placed first. The whole family called to

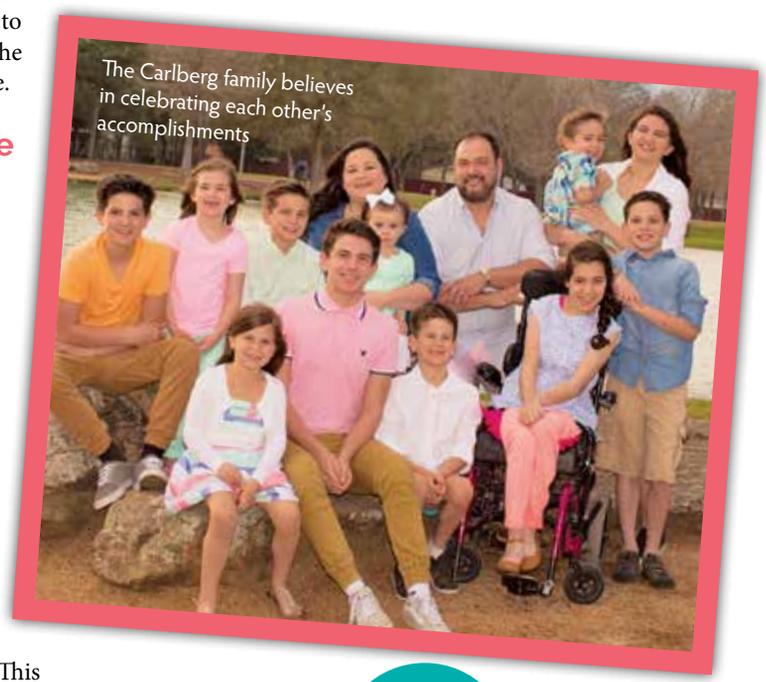
congratulate him. "You'd think he was just elected president," Elena boasts. "He couldn't stop smiling for days."

10. Focus on Relationships

Elena says David uses any spare time to play with or teach the children new things. "David listens intently when the kids talk," she shares. As a result, the kids shower him with love, devotion, and sincere affection. "When you focus on the individuals you're around, rather than just the things that need to get done, the result is deeper relationships. What you get out of a relationship is dependent upon what you put into it," she adds.

11. Count Your Blessings

Counting her blessings comes easily for Elena. "I've been blessed with getting to stay home with my kids and having the best role models in my mom, grandma, and aunts," she says. "I've been blessed in having a husband who always puts us before anything else. I've also been blessed with 11 of the most kind-hearted, unique, and gracious children in the world." KM



Annie,
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Alyssa,
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