



press clip

Every day is a birthday

ENTREPRENEUR Deborah Latouf must be one of the coolest mums in Townsville.

What kid wouldn't want to have their run of a toy shop or be able to test the latest and greatest gadgets on the market? The sports scientist owns a toy store called Entropy in Domain Central, and admitted to Gina Mosch that her two boys have so many toys they don't get any presents for their birthday. Ms Latouf is married to Sean and mum to Connor, 9, and Reilly, 7.

You own a toys store - that's every kid's dream. Are your two boys the envy of all their friends?

They are actually, they're two of the most popular kids in class. Funny that, isn't it! They do actually think it's pretty cool, except at birthday time because we have a no present policy and each year they choose a charity instead. How do you ask people to buy your children presents when you own a toy store? So since Connor was five we've had that policy. They've got the run of the toy store whenever they want so they don't need more stuff on their birthday, and I hope in some small way it teaches them some appreciation.

Are they spoil with the amount of toys they have?

They're not spoil in the sense that I let them take whatever they want from the shop, but I am always testing toys on them and, when samples come in, I try it out on them first. They certainly don't want for

anything, put it that way.

What are their favourite toys?

Riley is very construction-wise and, as a seven-year-old, he's into anything to do with building. It doesn't matter what it is, as long as you can build it - like Meccano and Lego. With Connor, my nine-year-old, it's interesting to watch him move into the next phase. They move out of the toys and are more into sporting stuff.

What is the best thing about being a mum?

I've enjoyed every stage of it. I'd just like to press the pause button because it just goes so fast. Having my own business now, I enjoy the fact that I can knock off work at quarter to three and go and get them from school and do their afternoon activities with them. I appreciate that for other working mums that's not possible, so I'm really grateful to be in that position.

How would your boys describe you?

I think they would think I'm pretty cool. I get out there and play sport with them and have fun and they're not embarrassed to be around me. My nine-year-old still gives me a kiss goodbye in the school yard - I'll take as many cuddles and kisses as I can get. I reckon they genuinely enjoy my company.

Do you wish you had done anything differently as a parent?

I wish I had savoured those moments when they were really

young more - because they seem so long ago now and, as the time goes on, you don't remember them as well.

What is the most difficult thing about being a parent?

The most difficult thing for me is finding the line between love and discipline. I think that the kids really need to know what the boundaries are, but they need to know it in a loving and caring way. I've got two very strong-willed little boys and I know they need to be disciplined, but at the same time I don't want to stamp that spunk out of them. It's always a fine line for me, with disciplining them and pulling them into line, but at the same time not crushing their spirit.

What is your best parenting advice to other mums and dads now?

Enjoy the moment - seize it and enjoy every moment. Also try to find time for yourself with whatever it is you like to do. For me it's exercise and, if I get out and ride my bike in the morning, I just find I enjoy the kids a lot more. As difficult as it is sometimes to find the time to do that, I know it makes me a better parent because I've got more energy and more patience with the kids.

What is your favourite way of spending time with the family?

Doing sporting activities - the kids love to run and be active. When we've got spare time that's what we spend time doing - throwing the ball around on The Strand or riding their scooters.



COOL MUM: Deborah Latouf with youngest son Reilly, older son Connor and dad Sean

Photo: ZAK SIMMONDS