

# ClarkFinal

Tue, 5/11 8:36PM 51:15

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

kendra, sutton, pregnant, people, grad school, job, feel, challenges, advice, months, parenthood, comped, kid, life, graduate school, thought, graduate student, comps, parent, decision

## SPEAKERS

Jenn Tostlebe, Kendra Clark, Jose Sanchez



Jenn Tostlebe 00:14

Hey everyone! Welcome back to The Crim Academy, where we are criminally academic. My name is Jenn and I'm here with my co host Jose.



Jose Sanchez 00:22

Hello.



Jenn Tostlebe 00:23

And today we're speaking to mother, doctoral candidate, and our fellow academic colleague Kendra Clark.



Jose Sanchez 00:29

Kendra is a sixth-year PhD student at CU Boulder in the sociology department. She recently defended her prospectus for her dissertation, where she explores cultural adaptations within correctional institutions and post-release, using a theoretical framework she developed as part of her master's thesis. Outside of her academic work, Kendra enjoys doing home renovations and watching Harry Potter on repeat. Kendra has a 16-month old son who was born at the end of her fourth-year in graduate school, and

she's continuously learning how to navigate the intersection of parenthood and graduate studies. Hi, Kendra, thank you for joining us.

**K** Kendra Clark 01:11  
Thanks for having me.

**J** Jose Sanchez 01:12  
I must say that the kid part is sort of a prerequisite for this episode. So we're pretty happy that you met the requirements.

**K** Kendra Clark 01:22  
I am qualified to speak as much as maybe anybody?

**J** Jose Sanchez 01:26  
Yeah, I will probably get a lot out of this episode as well. By the time this drops, I will also have a kid of my own, who will probably be about three or four months.

**K** Kendra Clark 01:39  
Remind me when you guys are due?

**J** Jose Sanchez 01:41  
November 7th.

**K** Kendra Clark 01:43  
Seventh? Oh, my gosh. Wow. That seems like it's coming up so quickly.

**J** Jose Sanchez 01:47  
I know. When I first heard the news back in March, I was like, oh, nine months? Seems like such a long time. And here we are.



Kendra Clark 01:56

Yeah, no, here you are. And then just a few blinks of an eye, you'll have a 16 month old and then I imagine it continues to go super quickly.



Jose Sanchez 02:06

Yeah. So by the time this comes out, your kid's gonna be almost two.



Kendra Clark 02:11

Yeah. When is it? When will this one drop?



Jenn Tostlebe 02:13

March 1st, ish.



Jose Sanchez 02:14

Sometime in March ish?



Kendra Clark 02:15

Oh, yeah. Yeah, he'll turn two in May. So yeah, that's so crazy.



Jenn Tostlebe 02:21

I was actually just thinking this morning about how it's been two years since you were pregnant. And I was like, thinking about when we were all in criminological theory together, with David. And I was like, oh, my gosh, that was a terrible time for Kendra.



Kendra Clark 02:36

That was so rough. Yeah. So yeah. Two years ago in August is when we found out that we were pregnant, well, I was pregnant. And yeah.



Jose Sanchez 02:49

That was the first semester of my first year.



Kendra Clark 02:53

Wow. So much has changed.



Jose Sanchez 02:55

I know. And then I remember you were the TA for our Data 1 class.



Kendra Clark 03:00

Yeah, I actually went into labor on the day of your guys' final.



Jose Sanchez 03:05

Yeah.



Kendra Clark 03:06

You texted me, I think, hey, how's everything going? You're not here?



Jose Sanchez 03:14

Yeah, I think we all had an idea when you weren't there. Yeah. I think Jason was just like, super giddy.



Jenn Tostlebe 03:26

Alright, so obviously, this episode is about parenthood in grad school, for those of you who are listening to us talk, and we're here to talk with Kendra, who went through quite a few different graduate school mile markers while pregnant and while being a mom.



Jose Sanchez 03:45

Sorry, I think there's one more thing that we should mention that for some reason, Kendra omitted from her introduction. She also won the student paper award for the division of Corrections and Sentencing at ASC.



Jenn Tostlebe 04:00

And she is on the job market right now.



Kendra Clark 04:03

Yep, doing doing all of the things.



Jenn Tostlebe 04:07

So Jose, do you want to get us started?



Jose Sanchez 04:10

Sure. So we're talking about having a kid in grad school and I think most people feel like the advice that you get when this subject gets brought up is, no, don't do it. Like that's a really bad idea. How did you end up deciding to have a child while in graduate school and what were some of the steps you took to prepare for motherhood?



Kendra Clark 04:38

Yeah, I would say that parenthood is different for everybody. But when you are a graduate student, you're right. I think that the collective advice is, maybe hold off, but it's interesting because there's not really an agreed on, hold off until when. It's not great to have a kid when you're a grad student, it's not great when you're a candidate, it's not great when you're ABD, you don't want to be on the job market and be pregnant or breastfeeding, and you definitely don't want to be pregnant or breastfeeding when you're on the tenure track. So like, for a lot of people, everybody maybe, that wants to eventually have kids, it's hard to know when that time is correct. Even when you're not a graduate student, I think it's kind of hard to decide when that time is correct. So for my partner and I, my husband and I were together before grad school. And I think that one of the things that we knew going into this was that we were going to be expanding our family before I graduated. So we didn't really know when, but we knew that that was something that we were going to do during this five or six year journey. And so really early on in my graduate career, I think during my second year, I set up a meeting with Stef Mollborn, who was the grad director at the time. But I chose her more based off of just like, I felt comfortable talking to her about my personal life. And like I, I respected her, admired her and thought that she would be able to give me good advice. And so that meeting, I sat down and just talked to her about my intentions of wanting to expand my family and trying to poke her brain for when she thought that that might be the best or best time to do that. So there was a few other women in our department, who had got pregnant and had babies before me who

were like kind of the trailblazers that made my life a lot easier, and made my decision maybe less alarming, shocking to some of the other faculty in the program. And their advice, I talked to most of them, was maybe to try and do it before defending and being on the job market, not so much because of the stigma, but just because of the time that's required. Most of them had their babies when they were right at the end, and on the job market. And some of them had to delay their progress forward for a semester or something just because the time; getting everything completed gets really difficult. So from that I decided, we're probably going to try to get pregnant after coursework that may be coursework, my course load, obviously, would be less. And then I was in a really great situation when I won my NSF fellowship, which gave me three years of non teaching funding. And so at that point, I went back to Stef and we like really kind of planned out the rest of my grad school trajectory of when I would take my funding and when I wouldn't. So I taught when I was pregnant, because it's a lot easier to teach when the baby is still controlled inside of your body and not able to disrupt you, except for I was sick my entire pregnancy, as you guys know. So there was some disruptions in my teaching, but much less so than if Sutton, that's my son's name, would have been out in the world already. And then I've been able to be on my fellowship, my whole time having certain Earth side, as I like to say. So that worked really well. So I think just soliciting advice from people that you respect and that you feel will be able to give you quality advice. That's what worked best for me. And then also just following your gut, we already talked about that people's advice is going to be not to do it no matter what I mean, nobody is ill intended, but it's hard to say when's the right time, and it's hard for people who aren't wanting the same thing as you to understand. And so you just have to make the decision for your family. Like David, my advisor, always says they're not going to read your CV at your funeral. So making these big life choices has to be kind of something that you and your family make together. And you just make it work. You figure the time out, I guess.



Jose Sanchez 09:07

Yeah. It sounds like you put a lot of thought into this journey.



Kendra Clark 09:13

Yeah, I was really nervous about making it all work out, you know, of not succeeding.



Jenn Tostlebe 09:18

I mean, I remember, like our first real time together, Kendra, was, what a nine hour drive to Texas, and then a nine hour drive back. And I remember us talking about this. And I mean,

that was one of your main goals. You know, like when people I feel like think about grad school, it's always like your first goal in life is to like finish that. But for you, it always seemed like, you know, you wanted to be a mom. And so you made it work for you.

**K** Kendra Clark 09:45

Yeah. Exactly. Yeah. Finishing grad school is a goal, but finishing grad school will also expand like, yeah, everything has to intertwine. It has to be a personal decision.

**J** Jose Sanchez 09:57

Yeah. We did not put nearly as much thought into our decision to have a kid.

**K** Kendra Clark 10:04

I also think that the experience is a little bit different. Not that this last seven months hasn't affected your life, but maybe your work has been affected less so then your partners while she's carrying the baby.

**J** Jose Sanchez 10:22

Yeah. So I think what's interesting for us too is COVID has really changed the playing field for us because she does get to work from home as opposed to having to go in, which I think would have made it really different. Because we had semi-planned it, but we completely missed our mark.

**K** Kendra Clark 10:43

It's hard to plan something like this.

**J** Jose Sanchez 10:45

It is, but you know, like, there's windows that are more optimal than others.

**K** Kendra Clark 10:51

Sure.



Jose Sanchez 10:51

And for her, because she works for a school district. She's on that school calendar. So we figured, summer time would be best, because then we both be off. But no, we completely missed the mark on that. And I think we might get lucky, in that her maternity leave is gonna line up well into her winter break. I think that this is one of the few good things that has come out of COVID, is that it's allowed us to both work from home and when Leo's here we'll probably get to work from home, also, which I think sort of makes it a little easier. And it also I don't know if this was the case for you. But it also sounds like for the next, I don't know how long, our house is just going to be a revolving door of guests.



Kendra Clark 11:49

Yeah, ours was a little bit different, because we were a state away from where all of our family was. And so we didn't have as many visitors as I imagine, we would have if we lived in Kansas at the time when Sutton was first born. And then also COVID has really limited the revolving door effect. But there still is a lot of in and out and make yeah, we did the same thing. Like Sutton was born at the beginning of May, we were really fortunate that we were able to, you know, we hit our mark kind of spot on. That's not always the case. Obviously. Parenthood is nothing like, we planned a lot for it. But there are so many things that we didn't even know we needed to plan for. So you can you can only plan so much.



Jenn Tostlebe 12:37

Alright, well, let's move forward a little bit aside from planning. So you were eight months pregnant, I think, when you were taking comprehensive exams, which is one of the like, major time points in our program.



Kendra Clark 12:55

Yeah. 35 weeks. So yeah.



Jenn Tostlebe 12:58

So what challenges, if any, I'm assuming there were some, did you face while preparing for comps and then while taking comprehensive exams?



Kendra Clark 13:10

Yeah, that was rough. I do not recommend. But after you know, I was already pregnant, I



knew that I was going to comp at some point. I ended up, you know, I wish I would have been able to comp earlier in my second trimester. But by the time I got my lists around and everything, it just didn't really work out. They recommend giving yourself a full semester to do your reading. And if I would have given myself a full semester, I would have been comping over his due date, which I thought sounded even worse. So I think you know what, I'm just really buckled down. And I, so I comped, when I was eight months pregnant. As I already said, I was sick, my entire pregnancy, I threw up very regularly. So that was probably the hardest challenge. So our comp exams, we got seven days, which is actually a change that they made while I was preparing for my comps. I thought that I was going to have the three day structure, one question a day. So I was really glad to have the seven days because I was also doing two different birthing classes, parenting classes. I think our breastfeeding and our birthing class were that same week, in the evenings. So trying to manage those classes, comping, you know that you always get all the advice of like, have your meals prepared so that you don't have to stop and cook. Well, I really frequently threw up my first meal and so I had double meals prepared and so that was a really complicating thing. It's not comfortable to sit for very long when you're that pregnant. So I did a lot of my typing like bouncing on my birthing ball like a yoga ball, trying to change positions, you're not sleeping well because you're anxious about comps, I mean anybody who's comped knows that it's just like a high anxiety time no matter what no sleeping well because of comps.



Jenn Tostlebe 15:07

I like barely slept.



Kendra Clark 15:10

It's like so kind of like a double whammy, not sleeping well because of pregnancy, not sleeping well because of comps. You have to stop every 20 minutes to go to the bathroom. It was a lot, I was grateful for the seven days. I was really worried on top of comps about the stress that the baby was feeling from my stress. I think that that was probably the worst part is that I was stressed about feeling stressed, and how that was affecting Sutton. But, you got through and it was over with, thank goodness. And I found out that I passed I think like a couple of weeks before he came. So that was nice.



Jenn Tostlebe 15:47

Yeah. Nice to know the results.



Kendra Clark 15:51

Would that have stuck if I hadn't revisions? And I was like, in labor. Oh, wow. That would have been cruel.



Jenn Tostlebe 15:58

That would have been very cool.



Jose Sanchez 16:01

And what do you get like 30 days, like a 30 day turn around?



Kendra Clark 16:05

Something like that. Like a month?



Jenn Tostlebe 16:09

Your like in the hospital, just had kid and having to do your revisions?



Kendra Clark 16:17

I would have been upset.



Jose Sanchez 16:20

Okay, so now we've gotten to, know you, you passed comps, Sutton's here, first couple of months. What was that? What was that? Like? Cuz I imagine there were quite a few challenges with those first few months and balancing your grad school stuff.



Kendra Clark 16:35

Yeah, I think that the hardest part about the first few months was balancing the grad school stuff. So the way it worked out with my fellowship, I wanted to give myself a true maternity leave as much as that was possible as a grad student. Because it's really not, I mean, they give you parental leave. But really, that's just like, you're allowed to take a semester off. It's not any form of support, they don't give you any financial support, any I don't, I think that you get to keep your health insurance. But I didn't want to take a

semester off, that wasn't going to be productive for me in any way. So I lined it up because his due date was in May. And I was off of my fellowship, the year that I was pregnant, like this school year that I was pregnant, then I lost funding, I didn't have any funding over the summer, and my fellowship didn't pick back up until September. So we knew that I wasn't gonna have any income. So we prepared for that. I could have taken a research job. But like I said, I wanted to get myself a true maternity leave. So I didn't do, I didn't sign up to do any work over the summer. But as we know, like being a grad student is an overtime job, it's not a full time job. It's an overtime job. There's no week that we've only worked 40 hours, probably double that. And even when you try, like you have a baby and I didn't have any research positions going on, your colleagues don't stop, the research doesn't stop, the projects that you're working on don't stop. And so it was it was really hard. And I felt like everybody around me understood and was trying to give me space and time. But there's just certain things that I was like obligated to do. And so I worked as little as possible, but also as much as possible to keep things going. So that was really hard to manage that time because you know, your newborn sleeps for like 20 minutes stretches. 20 minutes is not very long, especially when you're considering the fact that you've not showered or eaten since the last time, they gave you a 20 minute stretch. And oftentimes when your newborns sleeping, at least in my my situation, I was holding him because that time was like so cherished to me. Like they're only that little for so long. So for the first few months, I loved to hold him for his naps. And so you have the mom guilt if you put them down and you have the grad student guilt that we all know, if you don't put them down. So navigating that time was especially hard those first few months, I think. Even though everybody is understanding, you know, my family, my partnership with my husband is like very equal. He's changed far more diapers than I have, like far more diapers than I have. But there's some things that he can't do. Like, I nurse and so, he can't do that. We did do the whole pumping thing for various reasons. My son has a lot of eating restrictions, food restrictions, I had 4,000 ounces of breast milk that I had to give away because he wasn't able to eat it. So for different reasons that didn't work out. But finding the balance at the time is definitely the hardest.



Jose Sanchez 19:41

Oh yeah, that sounds tough.



Jenn Tostlebe 19:43

And taking a two month old on a plane for the first time.



Kendra Clark 19:48

Yeah. Oh my god, like I forgot that even happened. So yeah...



Jose Sanchez 19:52

Was that at the JRCD workshop?



Kendra Clark 19:54

Yeah, we attended a workshop that was held by JRCD in Maryland when Sutton was only two and a half months old. Well, I repressed. Jenn, myself, my mom bless her heart came with us, and then my two and a half month old son. We got on this airplanes, which worst airplane rides ever. I'm pretty sure both ways we sat in the airplane, not moving for like, three hours.



Jenn Tostlebe 20:23

Yeah, at least two if not three.



Kendra Clark 20:26

Like, it was absurd. And this is pre-COVID. This was like, just normal traveling. Wow. Yeah. And we yep, first air.



Jenn Tostlebe 20:35

He was so good, though.



Kendra Clark 20:38

So good. Yeah. Wow. And so that whole workshop, that's another thing, the whole workshop, I was using my breaks to pump and I was like, Really? You know, I felt so empowered during that workshop, because I was like, I'm freaking doing it. Like I am. I'm a momming superhero. I'm a graduate student superhero. Like, nobody can stop me. But like, damn, I was tired. I was like, I can do this. Like, I've got this. And like a million times since then I've felt that way. But also a million times since then I've been like what is happening? Such a roller coaster.



Jose Sanchez 21:22

But you just defended your proposal. And you're getting to wrap up your graduate experience. What are some of the new challenges that you face now that you're sort of at the towards the tail end of your graduate school career?



Kendra Clark 21:41

There's so many challenges, but right now, I feel like we're all facing some new challenges with like, the weight of the world. Yeah. So when Sutton was four and a half months old, we made the decision to leave Colorado and move to Kansas where both of our families are. That was in September 2019, the end of September 2019, that we made that decision, which was completely unexpected. We thought we would never leave Colorado, if we had the option. But something about a new little human coming into the world. We just really wanted him to be close to his grandparents and his cousins. That was really important to us. So we sold our house and moved back to Kansas, which, thank goodness, honestly, like we made that decision purely because we wanted the relationships to be able to happen, not because we were feeling overwhelmed with care or anything, we had care lined up. I felt supported with our friends and we had an uncle that lived in Colorado. So I felt supported. We just wanted the relationships. But between COVID and then some unexpected health things that Sutton has gone through, I literally don't think that we could have done it in Colorado, being in quarantine. And we're social scientists, we know how many variables are involved in human behavior. There's just so many unexpected things. I don't know the challenges are just like never ending, literally never ending. But that's that's the beauty of it. It's just like, I mean, any other time in graduate school, we all feel overwhelmed. I remember when Sutton was like three weeks old, being like, what did I used to do with my time? Like, why was I not productive before? I swear, I could write like 1000 articles now in one day, like, what did I used to do?



Jenn Tostlebe 23:32

Don't tell David that.



Kendra Clark 23:36

I'm sorry, that time is past. Lost time. But there's always going to be something that fills your time and something that's a challenge. I guess that's the point. Like my challenge right now is being a parent. But Jenn has challenges. Jose, I'm sure you have challenges, you're about to have a few more, in a different way. But it's like, it's beautiful, because you also have like, so much more beauty coming into your life from being a parent that I didn't

have before. So we all have it; just looks different.



Jose Sanchez 24:08

Yeah. So speaking of you, moving to Kansas, another piece of advice that I've gotten from several people was don't move while you're in your program. And so back when I was at Cal State LA, I had a couple professors who didn't finish their PhDs until years nine or 10 because they left the state that their school was then moved to Southern California and they told me if you want to finish quickly, don't move. But you moved you're in Kansas. So what have been some of the challenges of being in a different state than where you're going to school?



Kendra Clark 24:47

Yeah, maybe I deserve an award for like doing all of the things you're told not to do.



Jenn Tostlebe 24:53

And still staying on track with what you wanted.



Kendra Clark 24:56

And honestly, that's not intentional because Jenn knows like I'm a rule follower, like I knew what I'm supposed to do. So this is kind of funny. I never thought about it this way. But I have done a few things that I wasn't "supposed to do" as a graduate student. Honestly, so earlier, you said that one of the only good things that have come out of COVID is that you and your wife have been able to, like, have this time together. But honestly, I think that for me, a lot of things good have come out of COVID. And this being one of them because, so one of the challenges that I talked with David a lot before we moved was how I was going to stay connected when I wasn't able to be on campus. And so I moved in September, the rest of that fall semester, I was really feeling that I was like, oh, I'm not doing a very good job of staying connected. But then, lucky me. A global pandemic hit and now everybody's feeling disconnected, and everything is going virtual. So really, unless I tell people that I'm not in Colorado, people don't even know when I'm sitting in on a class or a meeting. So really, that's been great for me.



Kendra Clark 26:14

Being on the job market. And not being able to travel, like, it's been kind of like, I don't feel

like I'm missing out on networking. I'm sitting in on a lot of like, workshops for the academic and non academic job market that I maybe wouldn't have, you know, been able to facilitate doing virtually. But since everybody's virtual, it's really like, kind of been to my benefit. So lately, I've not been feeling the weight of moving away from Colorado, the way I was at first a little bit.



Jenn Tostlebe 26:46

That's awesome. The one positive of COVID. Alright, so you did mention this just barely, like two questions ago. So we've asked tons of questions about the challenges that have come with becoming a parent while in grad school. So what joys or positive have come out of becoming a parent, while in grad school?



Kendra Clark 27:11

Literally so many. So anybody who knows me beforehand, I always gave the advice of getting a dog in grad school, which a lot of people would say, do not get a pet, especially in your first year. But I got a pet in my first year and maybe it was my circumstance, like I had a partner who is really supportive, really involved pulls, I don't even feel like it's appropriate to say pulls his way in the relationship because there's, like, that gives the feeling that there's weight to be pulled, like, whatever I had support. And so we got two dogs, we did it twice. And I always, I always advocated for that, because I thought it gave the best, like release, something else to focus on for a little bit of time that was like just pure joy. Like, nobody is happier for you to freakin come home than your dogs.



Jose Sanchez 28:00

That's true.



Kendra Clark 28:01

Nobody, like my husband loves me, but he doesn't jump on me and like yelp at the top of his lungs when I opened the door, like your dogs do. So I always advocated for that. It gave you something that is just going to give you pure joy, unconditionally. And like kids are kinda the same way. Granted, sometimes that's in the form of whining at your feet. But also they love you unconditionally. And I don't know honestly, like what brings me more joy like, getting a publication or like your son like finding his belly button for the first time. Those things are little things day-to-day that maybe you took for granted. I never knew when I was pregnant that Sutton finding his belly button was going to be such a source of

joy in my life, but it is. So I think the little things and they all out, all outweigh the hard things. Like times a million. I know people say that all the time. You have no way to ever plan or know how tired you're going to be as a parent, especially as a graduate student parent because like I said, these are two overtime jobs. Graduate student. Parent. Neither of them really turn off, ever and that's such a challenge. But, no, it's like totally all worth it. It's the greatest.



Jose Sanchez 29:27

Well, I'm glad to hear you say that.



Kendra Clark 29:29

No regrets, Jose. No regrets. Even when, like, Sutton going through some sleeping stuff right now and oh my God, it's hard, but it's still like totally worth it.



Jenn Tostlebe 29:45

He's a little cutie. So.



Kendra Clark 29:48

I agree. Very cute. Biased, but...



Jenn Tostlebe 29:54

It's true though.



Jose Sanchez 29:56

I have to say I think the Mandrake picture is still one of my favorites.



Kendra Clark 30:03

This year, yeah, we're still working on that. It's hard. We don't know what Halloween's going to look like with COVID. And he's, like I mentioned his skin and his eating is like, so sensitive. I don't even know how far to go with Halloween. But part of me is like, go all out, because why not?





Jose Sanchez 30:21

Okay, so switching gears a little bit, maybe not that much. But can you tell us a little bit about your current career goals?



Kendra Clark 30:35

Current career goal. Alright, to have a career? This is going back. This isn't a parenthood exclusive challenge. I think that everybody right now who's on the job market has this shared sense of like, fear of what's going to happen? Are there going to be enough jobs? I think that I'm kind of fortunate in that becoming a parent has really made me more open to different career paths than I was originally thinking. So I had already kind of expanded my search and my thoughts about what I wanted to do, which now I think is kind of necessary because of COVID for everybody to do. So I kind of had, I was a little bit ahead of the ballgame in that sense. But yeah, I think I'm hitting all of the markets, the academic job market, the non academic job market, the postdoc market, the everything in between market, trying to expand my network as well as you can, when the conferences are getting canceled, trying to make connections and talk to people and get my materials around. With a kid at home, it's kind of hard for some reason, like, I wasn't planning that very well, I like passed my proposal and was like, okay, I'm gonna take a deep breath for a minute and get caught back up on everything that I was behind on. And then all of a sudden, I was behind on my job market materials, but I'm getting there. It will all be okay. I think one of the other challenges is that now I'm on all of the markets. And those look very differently, like the academic market is hitting now, and I imagine probably all the way through spring now because of COVID. And then the non academic market is kind of fluid all the time, but moves much quicker. So I'm like, seeing all of these non academic jobs, but I'm not like really ready to have a job right now. Because I have funding until August, but then these postdocs are coming through. And so like, I don't know, it's like navigating this new space, which you would think I was good at by now. Because, you know, like something about grad school that totally prepares you for parenthood is that like, once you get comfortable, things change, like your courses, and then you're working on your third year paper, and then comps, and then your dissertation, and then you're an RA, and then you're a TA, and then it's a new class and it's a new class prep, and it's a new project. Like once you get comfortable things change. That's exactly how parenthood is. You know, there's always teething or some illness, developmental milestone, whatever that comes up. It's always changing. And that's how the market is right now also. So there's like, you know, my mom who provides care for my son will be like, what's next week look like? And I'm like, I'll let you know next week. I have no idea what anything is supposed to be looking like right now. And maybe that's like the point that there's there's no rulebook for any of the things that I'm doing, which is challenging.



Jenn Tostlebe 33:55

All of your life's up in the air, right now.



Kendra Clark 33:58

I mean, I answered the question, What are my career goals? To get a career.



Jenn Tostlebe 34:05

And yeah, and then Sutton kind of changed those goals or open them up even farther, which was kind of beneficial for you right now.



Jenn Tostlebe 34:15

Yeah. All right. So last question. What advice do you have for other graduate students who are either wanting to expand their family or have a child or find themselves becoming a parent while in grad school?



Kendra Clark 34:31

Sure. So I probably have a few. So I've actually, this is like a very isolating experience, even though I don't, at least in our department, I've not had any negative experiences from it. I mentioned the women who were pregnant just a couple years before me, I really think that they like trailblazed and like made my life so much easier. They got everybody kind of on board, at least with thinking even if they don't agree with the decision to start family in graduate school, at least like to the point that it wasn't like, you're doing what? So that was, that was good. But I think just following your gut, not letting graduate school or wherever you are in your career dictate when you want to start your family. It will work out, people will adapt, you will adapt, your family will adapt, your program will adapt. Its 2020 people, like we can make these things work. Women are working, men are working, both in home and professionally all over the world. We can do it in academia, also. I think the next thing is try to find a network, it's really hard like something about when you become a parent. And I don't think that this is only in graduate school, I think that this is kind of universal. You all of a sudden become unrelatable to the people who aren't parents yet. And I don't think that that's intentional, I don't think that it's done maliciously at all, everybody wants to support you. But there's just something about your experience that like they they can't relate to anymore, even if it is in their future trajectory, if you're on the same trajectory, and eventually, someday, they want to be parents. And even sometimes

the parents who are like, way further along than you who have, you know, maybe teenagers, something about this time, entering parenthood or having a newborn, having a young toddler makes you very unrelatable. So try and find a network of people who you can connect to, that are in the same life spot because like, you're really going to need it. And if that's online, a virtual network, that's fine. Just somebody that you can be like, I was up six times in the night with my child, and I just love the crap out of them. Like, you just need somebody who can like understand both of those playing fields. And then I think my last bit of advice is to like, and you probably hear this like a million times, but really try and find something that puts you first because as we've talked about a lot, parenthood is an overtime job, graduate student is an overtime job, and you have so much guilt. I mean, I know that like through grad school, I've talked with both of you. I've talked with everybody. You just have guilt every time you're not working. You get an email, if you ignore the email, you have guilt. If you don't ignore the email, then you have anxiety or you have anxiety if you don't read the email, if you do read the email. No matter what. And parenthood is a lot the same unfortunately, like you have guilt if you are you have guilt if you're not. And a lot of times in order to fit everything in for me to feel like I spent enough time with Sutton and that I spent enough time working. That means like I don't sleep or I don't shower or I don't eat or I don't check in with my family and friends. And I'm still working on making sure that that's not where I fall short. Sometimes it will be my professional life that needs to fall short so that I can shower. Like that's a fundamental, no, okay, it's a need. I need to do it sometimes. I showered for this occasion. I had to put it in my calendar, to shower so that I could zoom with you guys. Like, it's hard to not not feel guilty and it's easiest to sell yourself short. Instead, try not to do that as much as possible. I don't have advice for how to improve it. But that's also something that I'm working on.



Jose Sanchez 38:35

Yeah, because my two cents on advice and I'm obviously not where Kendra is right now. But I do think, and I was telling Jenn this earlier, that it's probably something you want to think about at least a little bit: if you want to have a kid in grad school. Because it was a little stressful. Like I said, I didn't plan it out as much as Kendra did, or I should say we, my wife and I, did not plan out as much as Kendra but just having a semblance of a plan and a timeline made it a little easier. When the news finally came, like if it had been a complete accident, I probably would have felt a little more stressed out, having to think really quickly how everything was going to change. But you know, I already sort of had an idea of how things were gonna happen. COVID hadn't really hit at that point. So that kind of did throw things into a loop a little bit. But I actually think it did work out for the better. So like, you know, I didn't tell anybody that I was gonna have a kid. I still don't tell people unless I feel like I really have to tell them. But you know, I obviously had to tell David at some point, and it was probably best to do it before he was here.



Kendra Clark 40:00

And that is a privilege that you have, like, you have the option of when and how you told people that I think when you're the one carrying the baby, you don't necessarily. So finish your thought, but I have another piece of advice.



Jose Sanchez 40:22

Yeah, no, I was just gonna say like, you know, when I told David, thankfully, he was on board with it. And he sort of helped me come up with a little bit of a plan. But the plan changed a little bit because of COVID. But, yeah, I think even just having a rough outline, would be helpful.



Kendra Clark 40:41

Yeah. So kind of expanding on, I had said earlier to like, do what's best for your own family. But so since I've had Sutton, I've like, I don't want to say mentored because that makes it sound more official, but I've spoken with, given advice to four different women at CU and beyond who are navigating the same playing field trying to start a family, how does that fit in with academia, etc, etc. And something that always happens is the feeling that we need to get permission to do it from our chair, if you're already a faculty, from our advisor, from whoever it is, and like, I just like, I had the same feeling. But when I hear other people say it, I'm like, just don't hold that weight, you don't need somebody's permission to tell you that you can start your family. And I know that that's hard. And that's scary. And one of the things that I did really intentionally, like Jenn mentioned earlier, I was loud and proud about wanting to have a baby in grad school. I don't think that there was anybody who had spoken to me for more than five minutes, probably, that didn't know that I was planning to have a baby in grad school. And that can also be a scary territory, maybe because it is pretty stigmatized. But I felt like for me, it would be easier to put that worm in people's ears leading up to it, so that when I walked into the symposium with a nine month pregnant belly, the, you know, the director of IBS wasn't like, interesting, you know, they knew they probably had heard me talking about it two years ago.



Jose Sanchez 42:21

I mean, if anything, they're probably like, cool this Kendra delivers.



Kendra Clark 42:27

So it, yeah, to the point that like, to the extent that you feel comfortable, and to the extent that it is your intention, and that you are planning this decision, which I realized isn't always the case, letting it be known. Don't try and keep it a secret unless it's important to you, but don't feel like you have to keep it a secret. Hopefully that doesn't influence your job. I always told myself that if a job didn't want to hire me because I was pregnant, nursing, or planning a family that I didn't want that job. I know that's a personal decision and not everybody feels that way. But it was something that was important to me and so I didn't ever want to feel like I had to hide the literal most important part of my life. So that's my other advice.



Jenn Tostlebe 43:07

That's crazy that, I mean, I haven't really even considered having a kid. So that hasn't come across my mind that people have felt the need to get permission.



Kendra Clark 43:19

I've talked to four women in the last, since COVID. Started, I've actually had phone conferences for two people who are graduate students or partners of graduate students, one faculty member, and one woman who is looking to become a graduate student and looking for to see if she even wanted to because she knew she wanted to start a family, and every single one of them has talked about, well, maybe I should talk to my chair, before I do this. Maybe I should talk to my advisor before I do this and ask if they think that that's okay. Which I told you, I, I had the meeting with Stef and I didn't feel like at the time I was asking for permission. But maybe I kind of was.



Jenn Tostlebe 44:03

To get feedback on it.



Kendra Clark 44:04

Yeah. Would this be an okay, time? Like, yeah, that's such a personal decision like I would, I don't like that that's something that we feel like we have to do.



Jose Sanchez 44:14

So I do have one more question that just sort of crept up in my head and I think we'd be remissed if we didn't ask it seeing how this is The Crim Academy. So being a criminologist,

has that impacted your parenting, because I've thought about this a lot. And I want to just maybe feel like I'm not alone, in my head. What do I bring to the table? Knowledge on crime?

K

Kendra Clark 44:42

Yeah, so a criminologist and a sociologist, both of those permeate my parenting life so much. I think that, I'm from a small Midwest town, things are done a certain way here and I've definitely probably not done it the way that my family and friends expected. I've talked to David before and I know David's talked to me about his kids like, you know, seeing somebody pulled over. And you know, Cyrus asking, "Daddy, why? Why did he commit crime?" and David like going on like social control, "Why didn't he commit crime?" So we're not, Sutton's not to the age that we're like having those conversations, but especially with what's going on in the world right now. The racial, racial injustices, RBG's death, the election, the social disparities, health disparities going on with COVID. Sutton's only 16 months, but he has gotten an earful about the way that I feel about all these situations and the way that we as citizens, as people with privilege should be moving forward. So that's maybe more sociological, then criminological? I've not really like, had any hands on examples for how, well I mean, I guess like gout when we're talking about racial and justices, obviously, it's all intertwined. But it for sure is going to be a heavy, heavy part of your parenting. I think that it's beautiful and great. I think other people think I'm crazy.

J

Jose Sanchez 46:18

Yep. Now I've found myself reading a couple weeks ago, I was reading this article that was an evaluation of a parenting program that incorporates social learning theory. The learning theorist in me was like, Yes, we're gonna use learning theory to raise my child.

K

Kendra Clark 46:40

Yeah, for sure.

J

Jose Sanchez 46:42

I'm almost like, I know what the correlates for delinquency are and like, what are the risk factors for gang joining? So let's just avoid those.



Kendra Clark 46:50

Yeah, we're just going to avoid all the things. Also things like deterrence when Kyle's talking about like what we do and don't know about deterrence working and like severity. And so then I go home, and I'm like, I'm not going to give you a harsher punishment for, you know, throwing the toothpaste and getting it on the wall, I'm going to make you feel very certain that going to be punished. My husband is probably like, Okay, can we just like, get the toothpaste cleaned up and move on? That's fine. I feel like just as graduate students also, like the amount of research that I do for every single parenting decision from the second, I decided I wanted to be a parent, until now, like, the toys that we play with, the products that we use, like, I can't ever turn my research brain off. I don't know if that's a shared experience with all graduate students or if that's just unique to me.



Jose Sanchez 47:50

At least as far as I'm concerned, I do that too.



Jenn Tostlebe 47:55

I do that life. I don't have a baby, but I do that with life. So



Kendra Clark 47:59

That's just a graduate student thing, and I like felt like I had my life under control. And then I realized that there was another life that I needed to like, figure out a whole like, you know, the baby industry is just massive.



Jose Sanchez 48:20

Yeah, when like, looking to like for cribs, car seats. Like, man, like just hours and hours,



Kendra Clark 48:29

Diapers, shampoos. And like, still like keeping in mind that these are humans, and there's so many variables involved, because before Sutton got here, I was like, I have the perfect shampoo. I have the perfect lotion. And he's like allergic to all of them. So joke's on me. Hundreds and hundreds of hours spent and like you still can't get it right. And that's just like parenthood. That's just how parenthood is. Like you have to adapt. Graduate students, we have to adapt. We are just really fortunate that we have a special skill set that might let us adapt more efficiently. That's how I look at it.



Jenn Tostlebe 49:04

A good way of looking at it. I like that. Yeah.



Jose Sanchez 49:11

Well, Kendra, thank you so much for joining us today.



Jenn Tostlebe 49:14

Yeah, thank you.



Jose Sanchez 49:16

This was very insightful. And is there anything that you'd like to plug then think coming out to I mean, people should be on the lookout for Kendra. She is looking for a job.



Kendra Clark 49:28

Yeah, hopefully by March. Well maybe not, I don't know. I'll be just about wrapping up my dissertation and defending so if you're looking to hire, I have some skills you might be interested in.



Jenn Tostlebe 49:41

She has lots of skills everyone. Lots of skills.



Jose Sanchez 49:47

Where can people find you? Are you on Twitter? Just email, researchgate, Google Scholar.



Kendra Clark 49:53

Yeah, email would probably be best. I'm not super active on Twitter. I do have a Twitter. My handle is @kendrajclark, and then my my email is kendra.clark AT colorado.edu. Yeah, I really need to pick up my social media game. It's really ages me and maybe it's a mom thing.





Jenn Tostlebe 50:16

I was like, you're younger than both of us. You're just busier, you have a human that you're keeping alive.



Kendra Clark 50:23

I'm just not very good at social media. Feel free to email me.



Jenn Tostlebe 50:31

Alright. Well, that's all we have. Thank you so much for sharing with us.



Kendra Clark 50:35

Thank you guys.



Jenn Tostlebe 50:37

The Criminology Academy is available wherever you listen to podcasts. Make sure to follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @thecrimacademy. If you're on Apple podcast, please rate, review, and subscribe. Alternatively, let us know what you think of the episode by leaving us a comment on our website, [thecriminologyacademy.com](https://thecriminologyacademy.com). And lastly, share The Crim Academy episodes with your friends and family!