

## Making the Most of Your Family Time



# BALANCE WORK AND PARENTING



that you and the person who will be looking after your children while you are at work, have similar child-rearing philosophies. This provides consistency and stability for the children and reinforces your home-based parenting efforts.

- Communicate openly and regularly about any behavioural issues you notice your children have at home and at work with your caregiver - to formulate a plan for countering problem behaviour on both fronts.
- Visit the child care facility on a regular basis, even when you are not there to pick up or drop off the kids, just to stay involved and be aware of what your children's day is like.

## 4 Create a sick plan

When your child gets sick, it is important that you are able to ensure your child's care, and handle it in a way that does not threaten your work reputation or position.

- Ask your boss about bringing work home in case you have to leave work to pick up a sick child. That way, you may not miss valuable work hours.

## 5 Delegate tasks

Lessen your load by assigning household chores to each family member, making the children responsible for their own personal hygiene (showers, brushing teeth, fixing hair, etc.)

## 6 Plan meals ahead of time

Try these techniques to save on time and effort: Use the crock pot to slow-cook meals while you are at work. Double the recipe when you make dinner, then freeze the extra in an airtight container until you are ready to bake it.

Make a casserole the night before, then reheat it in the oven when you get home from work.

■ **IN ORDER TO** balance work and parenting, leave your work at work, and keep your focus on family when you are at home. This may mean turning off your cell phone, not checking your email, scheduling family activities, making it a point to eat dinner together, turning the television off, and talking about how your day went.

■ Dedicate a regular block of time just for doing whatever it is you feel like doing. By taking a break from your day-to-day responsibilities, you not only rest your mind, but also rejuvenate yourself when it is time to get back to your duties.

■ Nurture your adult relationships. If you are married or attached, it is important that you and your partner engage in enjoyable activities outside the responsibilities associated with work and parenting.

■ Additionally, making time to socialise with your peers is an important part to stay balanced.



**WORKING** and parenting are endeavours that require considerable amounts of time and effort. If you are responsible for maintaining employment and raising children, you may find that filling the myriad requirements of both tasks can be challenging.

With some careful thought and planning, it is possible to successfully incorporate both roles into your life. Follow these suggestions on how to balance work and parenting.

## ■ STEPS

### 1 Manage your time wisely

Keep a calendar for both career and family. This puts equal priority on both schedules, and enables you to make plans with both schedules in mind.

- Follow the same routine each day. When your children know exactly what to expect and what is expected of them, it is much easier to keep

them on task and act autonomously, to save time and reduce stress, especially when you are in a hurry.

- Prepare for mornings the night before. Avoid time-consuming morning debates by picking the following day's outfits before bed, and lessen the morning hustle by pre-packing lunches and backpacks.
- Take advantage of the earliest part of the day. The few hours before your children wake up are great for personal time, and can be used to exercise, read, shower, or just enjoy a cup of coffee.

### 2 Get involved in your children's schooling

Make it a point to help your children with their homework. Not only does this promote their academic well-being, but it is also quality time spent together.

- Use personal off days to

attend school functions and field trips.

- Combine work and parenting by volunteering your professional skills to the PTA. For example, if you are a good cook, you may volunteer to donate pastries to the bake sale, or if you are a book keeper, you may offer to be the PTA treasurer. Focus on things that you can do, even if your work schedule does not allow for you to be at school in person.

### 3 Develop a partnership with your childcare provider

Having a personal relationship with your children's care giver can relieve a lot of the stress associated with working and parenting. The more involved you are with your children's home away from home, the less you worry about them when you can't be with them.

- Choose your caregiver carefully. It is important