
Tips for Parents: Achieving Work-Life Balance

Your job may give you satisfaction and support. But as a working parent, your job can also cause stress if you isolate yourself and don't communicate. Below are some tips on how to work together with your employer, and find ways to balance your work life and your family life.

1. Talk with your employer

Let your employer know that you love your job, but that you are also a parent with a family. Talk openly with your supervisor. Work together to solve any problems between your work and family life.

2. Learn company policies

Find out about all company policies related to sick days and personal days. Can you use them when your child is sick? Ask if you can make up any lost time by taking work home, coming in early, or staying late. Is job sharing or flextime possible?

3. Seek out feedback

You may feel you are doing poorly (or well) on the job. But this may not be true. Unless you get feedback, you'll never know for sure. Set aside time with your supervisor to talk about your performance. Find out whether you're living up to expectations.

4. Set up a network

Your workplace can be a great source of emotional and practical support. Use breaks, lunch hours, or other free time to talk with other working parents and learn from each other. It's fun and helpful to share feelings, experiences, and ideas.

5. Be prepared

Before your child gets sick, line up emergency child-care options. This may be your partner, relative, or a friend. You can help avoid some sick-child calls by knowing your child-care provider's policy ahead of time.

6. Get organized

Does your child keep forgetting to bring in homework, lunch, or permission slips? Then it's time to get organized. Each night, make sure your child packs up everything needed for school if they are old enough to do this on their own. Then double-check again in the morning. As they get older, children can start to have more responsibility. They can make their own checklists.

7. Keep it short

If your child checks in with you when they get home from school, keep the call short. Limit unnecessary conversation by making up a new list of things for your child to do each day. Know what you will do if your child doesn't call on time.

8. Set limits

If your child-care provider or the school calls you, find out what the problem is. See if it's something you can deal with later. Explain your work situation to your child-care provider. Set limits as to what you consider an emergency.