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How Mothers Can Balance Work and Family

If you're a mom who not only has beautiful children but also a job you love, plenty of people have probably said you "have it all." While you have been able to start a family and a successful career, you know all too well that having it all also means having the pressures of the workplace piled on top of the demands of parenthood - and that's not an easy act to balance.

CareerBuilder.com's annual Mother's Day survey finds that working mothers are eager to trade the office for family time if only it were financially feasible. Forty-three percent of working moms are willing to take a pay cut if it allows them to spend more time with their children. Of those willing to take the pay cut, 34 percent are willing to give up ten percent or more of their salaries. Fifty-one percent of moms who live in households with more than one income would leave their job if their family could live off of their spouse's or significant other's income.

Not enough hours in the day

Finding the time to do their job and still be involved parents is a daily struggle for today's working mothers. Late nights in the office can mean missing a family dinner, a teacher conference or baby's first words. Seventeen percent of surveyed mothers have missed three or more significant events in their children's life in the last year. In fact, 34 percent of mothers admit to spending less than three hours each day with their children.

One common way mothers attempt to balance their workload and their families is to bring work home with them, which can help advance their careers but also damage their personal relationships. One key problem with bringing home work is that it means you might be in the same room as your children, but your mind is still at the office. Yet sixteen percent of working moms bring work home at least three days a week, while one in five brings it home every workday. Perhaps unsurprisingly, 24 percent of mothers cited work as having a negative impact on their relationships with their children.

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How to make it work

Although raising children while holding a job outside of the home will always be a challenge, here are some steps you can take to ease the pressure of being a working mom.

1. Incorporate telecommuting into your workday. Many companies allow their employees to work from home one or more days per week, which is an easy way for you to spend more time in the morning and afternoon with your children rather than in standstill traffic. Check with your human resources department and employee manual to see if telecommuting is an option. Of course, to telecommute you should be self-disciplined and able to get your work done even though the boss isn't leaning over your shoulder.
2. Use one calendar for all appointments. If you have a conference scheduled for Monday morning, you're not going to be late to work. If your daughter has a soccer game Wednesday night, will you have the same determination to be there on time? Putting all of your appointments - whether they involve the office or the family - on one calendar makes it easier to avoid schedule conflicts and missing personal appointments. You'll also be able to notice if you're spending more time on work than on family with a quick glance at the calendar.
3. Make your family a priority. Although your family is the most important thing in your life, you might forget to show it. Devote your weekends and any free weekday evenings to family activities. Even if you can't plan a mid-week activity, make a quick phone call to your children to see how their school day went.
4. Take it easy. Work can become so hectic that you forget that you actually do like your job and the people around you. Leave some free time to relax and regroup between meetings so you don't stay in a constant state of stress. You'll be able to appreciate what you do and whom you work with. Also, keep evenings and weekends free of projects so you can rest and be completely recharged when you head back to the office.
5. Let others do their share. Make sure you're letting the people around you take on some responsibility. You might be tempted to do everything yourself, but you'll only stress yourself out. If you're a manager, delegating responsibility will ease your workload and allow your staff to develop their skills.