

# I can't do it all! How do I manage?

## BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY:

*Routines for the rough spots.*

**J**uggling the demands of a family and a job is an art. It takes organization, patience and practice. Keeping all those "balls in the air" is very difficult. Here are some tips to help your balancing act.

• **Good parenting doesn't mean that every moment is wonderful.** Hassles are a normal part of family life. Your time together doesn't have to be perfect. Don't expect time to be conflict free. Remember that solving problems together creates family bonds.

**Lower your expectations.** No one can do it all. Something has to give. It's better to let it be the spotless house or the home-cooked meals, than your sanity!

**Focus on one day at a time.** Ask yourself, "How will I show my children I enjoy them today?" Staying in the present moment reduces stress, and your children will sense that you're really with them.

**Let go of "shoulds" from your childhood.** You don't have to set up the same good experiences you had. They may not be practical anymore. Adapt new ideas of family life. Your children don't share your memories. New, loving traditions will have just as much meaning for them as your old favorites.

**Don't let conflicts at work spill over.** Deal with workplace problems the best way you can. Try to create relationships at work that give you emotional energy instead of draining it.

**Talk away stress.** Don't blame yourself when things don't go smoothly. Talk to supportive friends. Ask other parents how they balance work and family life.

**Walk away stress.** Exercise is known to reduce stress. Take brisk walks at lunch time, or after work.

**It's okay to say "no" to your children.** Sometimes guilt over work and family conflicts makes parents give in too easily to their children. Discipline is a vital part of family life.

**Avoid overcommitting yourself.** Don't get overtired. Plan out the month's activities on a large family calendar. If it looks too crowded, prioritize and eliminate. Only do the things that are important to you and that you have the time for.

**Keep a sense of humor.** When all else fails, laughter is still the best medicine.