



Back-to-School Tips for Working Parents



Summer vacation often gives families more time than usual to connect. However, as the summer comes to an end, families begin to think about sending their children back to school. The return of school schedules, homework, sports and other extracurricular activities can often bump family time to the back burner.

With the upcoming school year hopefully looking more normal than last year's, here are some tips for tackling back-to-school time as a working parent.

Make being involved a priority

As a working parent, you may not be able to get involved with everything, but there are probably a few activities and events you can commit to. Tell your kids which events you're going to be part of – and then make sure you keep your promise. Whether it's volunteering for the PTO or organizing a group activity for the families at your school, consistency and support are key.

Say "yes" – but not to everything

While it's important to stay involved, it's simply impossible to chair every committee at your kids' school. Select one or two causes that are most important to you and your kids and commit to those. Setting unrealistic expectations about what you can sign up to do – on top of taking care of your home, family and career – will only lead to disappointment and frustration for everyone.

Connect daily

Make a point to truly connect every day with each of your kids – even if it's just helping your son with his math homework or tucking your daughter into bed. What's more, setting a special time each week or month to share a favorite activity with your kids one-on-one can go a long way in helping to maintain your bond. Make sure you keep lines of communication open as your kids face challenges or struggles they need to discuss with you.

Strike that elusive work-life balance

Even pre-COVID, many workplaces allowed employees to work remotely on certain days. Now, for many jobs, it's a default way of working. If you are able to work from home even some of the time, you gain some flexibility in being available for your kids during school hours.

Maintain your interests

Try not to stretch yourself too thin between work, home and family. You don't want to lose sight of your own interests and well-being, especially during stressful times. Set personal goals for yourself – maybe it's learning a new language or starting a new hobby. Take time each week to work towards your interests. Taking care of yourself enables you to provide the best care and support to your family.

The bottom line – don't be too hard on yourself. Every single parent at your kids' school struggles with some aspect of balancing their own life with their children's needs; it's just the nature of being a parent. Strive to find little ways each day to connect with your children and show them you support them and care about what's important in their lives.

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