

7 Tips to Help Busy Parents Juggle Work and Family

Have a master family calendar

A master family calendar is a great way to keep track of everyone's commitments, appointments, and activities. Keep it in a central location in your house—perhaps in the kitchen or by the front door—and updated it regularly. Make sure that all the family members know about it and update their appointments as well. This might take some time to work smoothly, but having a master schedule for the family will make your life easier. (It will also highlight any conflicting appointments or activities that might need to be rescheduled.)

Get takeout or go out to eat once during the week

Families often reserve the weekends for going out to dinner or ordering takeout, but consider doing this on a weeknight instead. It doesn't have to be anything fancy, but giving yourself one night off from having to cook in the middle of the week can reduce stress and give the family a chance to catch up over a relaxing meal.

Get your kids involved in helping around the house

Cleaning and cooking are two household chores that can take up a significant amount of our time as parents. Think about involving your kids and getting them to help you with these – or other—household chores. It will teach them responsibility and a good work ethic, but most importantly, it will allow you to spend time together doing something as a family. Even very young kids can help out—perhaps you can let them wash plastic containers in the sink while you empty out the dishwasher.

Outsource tasks if you can

As organized as you might be the amount of things that have to get done when you work and have a family is overwhelming. Think about whether you can outsource any of the tasks that take up significant time and effort. Can you afford to hire some cleaning help once a month? Have your groceries delivered? Have someone else mow your lawn? It is certainly a financial investment to get help but it will free up your time and energy to spend with your family or finishing up work that needs to be done. If you consider how much your time is worth you might realize that it is actually cheaper to outsource some household tasks.

Focus on your kids when you're with them

If you're one of millions of parents balancing work and family you've probably been in a situation when you're thinking about work or checking your phone or Blackberry while playing with your kids. Sometimes you don't have a choice when urgent things come up, but generally, try to focus 100% of your attention on your kids when you're spending time with them. It will create a closer and better experience for you and the kids and when you have to return to work it will reduce the guilt that many of us feel as working parents. Your kids will also feel that you're focused on them and will be secure in your relationship and your focus on them even when you have to work and can't be there with them.

Allow things—and yourself—to be imperfect

We don't like the term work-life balance because it implies that there is some perfect balance out there that we're supposed to achieve. In fact, we think that one of the most important ways to reduce the stress of juggling work and family is to let go of your inner perfectionist and accept that things won't always work out exactly as you'd like. You won't make it to every soccer game at your kids' school and you'll probably be late on some work assignments. Dust bunnies might become your friends and you might have to order takeout more often than you'd like. But that's more than OK and if you can embrace the imperfection you'll stress less about trying to get it all just right.

Take time for yourself, even if it's just 10 minutes

Most of us have heard this advice yet many of us manage to ignore it. But it's not a good idea and you should work hard on your schedule to make sure that you take some time for yourself. Start with just 10 minutes a day. What you do with those minutes is up to you, but you could grab a cup of tea and your favorite book, meditate, do yoga, or go for a brisk walk, call a friend, or read a magazine. As long as it's an activity you enjoy doing it for a few minutes will help you feel a bit more refreshed and ready to continue with your juggle.

About the Author

Work It Mom is a community for [working mothers](#). This site is a place where a busy working mom can find information to make her life a little bit easier and connect with other moms like her.

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