



BETTER
KID CARE
PROGRAM



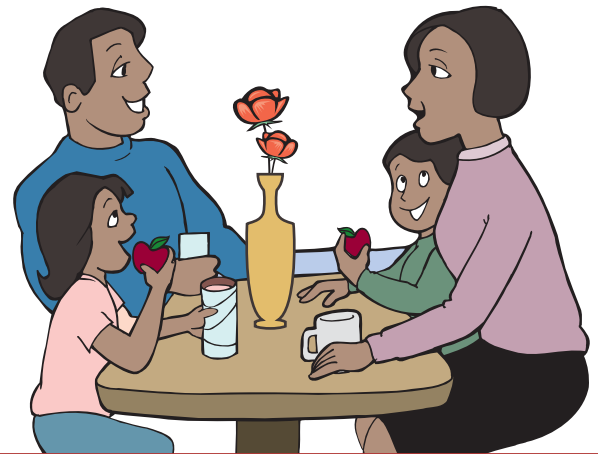
Family Time Work Time

A B A L A N C I N G A C T

Building Strong Families

Family Traditions

At certain times of the year many families get together to celebrate. People have their own ways of celebrating holidays and other events. There are religious and national holidays. Some cultures have their own unique celebrations. There can be special food and family gatherings at meals. Some families have important religious customs and services. Often there are traditional decorations. Some celebrations involve gift giving and some do not. Most important is time spent together and following your family's traditions. Your family traditions will lead to memories your child will have forever and will probably follow later on in life.



Tips for Parents

Being a good parent involves doing so many things for and with your child. Busy parents need lots of energy to keep going. You spend a lot of time taking care of your child, but it is also important for you to take good care of yourself. This means eating well, getting enough sleep, and exercising regularly.

Here are some tips for you:

- Eat regular meals. If you snack, make sure they are nutritious.
- Get enough exercise. Make time to keep physically fit by taking walks, exercising, bike riding, etc. You will be setting a good example for your kids, too!
- Don't underestimate the value of a short "power nap." A fifteen to twenty minute nap in the middle of a busy day can help you totally relax. This break can energize you to cope with the rest of the day. Just find a quiet place where you can be alone, sit or lie down, close your eyes, relax, and think about pleasant things. You'll be amazed what a difference it can make in your day. If you tend to fall asleep when relaxing, you might want to set an alarm!
- Allow time for some fun in your life. Do things with friends, as well as family. Laughter is good medicine. It helps with attitude. Positive attitudes make a difference in how you handle things.
- Hobbies, creative activities, going to movies, attending concerts, or watching sporting events are good outlets to reduce stress in your life. Make time for something you enjoy and don't feel guilty! Find a friend or relative who is willing to watch your child one night, then you can take care of her child another time. You might even schedule a regular night out every week with this arrangement.

Help Your Child through Hectic Times

Holidays, and even everyday hectic family schedules, can cause children to be stressed. Try some of the following tips to help your child:

- Have a space where your child can go for quiet times. This can be some large pillows in a corner with books, puzzles, puppets, and other calming things to do.
- A rocking chair or comfortable arm chair can make a cozy corner for relaxation.
- Turn off the television and play some calm, soothing music while your child plays quietly.
- Try to have some calm, one-on-one time with your child every day, even if it is just for a few minutes. Talking with, and really listening to, your child will make him feel good.
- A large cardboard carton with one side cut off makes a great quiet space for a child. Include a couple of small pillows and some books.
- Drape a blanket or sheet over a couple of chairs or over three sides of a table to make a good get-away place for your child.
- Offer your child choices of two or three favorite activities to do. A child feels special when able to make a choice.
- When you have time to supervise, try some soothing activities with your child such as water play, finger painting, and playing with play dough.
- Be sure to tell your child ahead of time when there will be changes in schedules and routines. A warning about an upcoming change can reduce stress.



More from Better Kid Care

The Better Kid Care Web Site at www.betterkidcare.psu.edu has more information for parents. Look for other *Family Time-Work Time* issues, *Parents Count*, child care and activity tip sheets, snack ideas, choosing child care tips, school readiness information, and the monthly Better Kid Care E-Newsletter. To sign up for the E-Newsletter, send a request to BetterKidCareNews-subscribe-request@lists.psu.edu.

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