



# Family Time Work Time

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

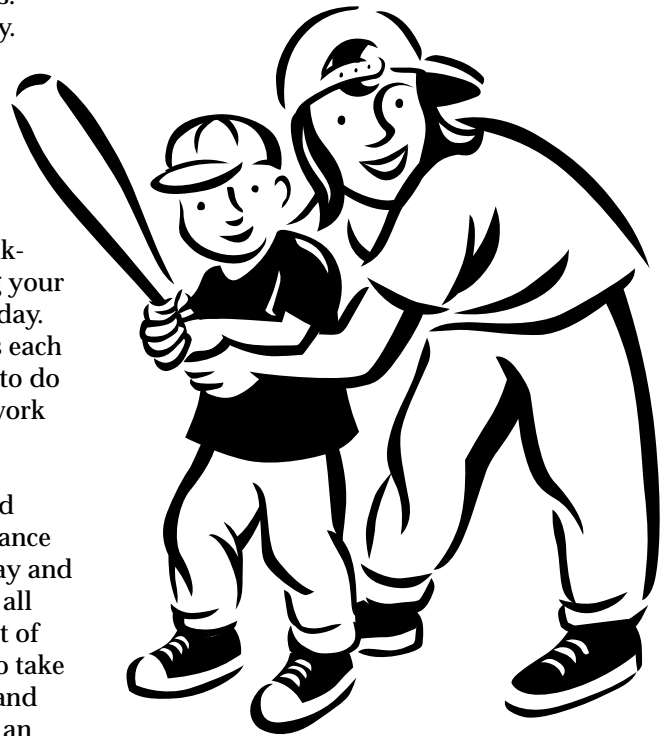
## Building Strong Families

### Quality Times with Your Kids

Young children love computer games, I-Pods, and video games. Many children want to spend many hours using them each day. Parents need to limit time spent with these activities, making sure their child is doing other things such as outdoor play and exercise. It is important to maintain your values and do what is good for your child.

Stay connected to your children. Make time each day to talk with your children and do things together. This might mean taking a bike ride or a walk with your child. It may mean sending your child out to play in the yard for a certain amount of time each day. It may mean reading stories together at bedtime or other times each day. It may mean having a hobby that you and your child like to do together, such as building model airplanes or doing a needle work project.

Make dinner time a special family time when the television and video games are off and the telephone not answered. It is a chance for everyone in your family to talk about what they did that day and to make plans for the rest of the week. This not only gives you all time to communicate, it also helps your children form the habit of conversing with you and each other. Your children will learn to take turns and listen to others. They will model the good manners and consideration they see you showing each other. Dinner time is an important family time.



### Reading Times are Special Times

Children who read a lot do better in school and life. Make reading times happen every day at your house. A bedtime story is a good habit. Reading to a small child for a few minutes when you get home from work can make the whole evening go more smoothly. Your child has been away from you all day, and those short one-on-one times are important. Let your child see you reading newspapers, magazines, or books. This shows that you value reading, and children copy what they see their parents doing. You can be a really good model for your child. Have children's books around for your child to look at. You might want to subscribe to a children's magazine. Kids love to get things in the mail and there are some good children's magazines available. Make reading a priority for your family!



## Refresh Those Sneakers

There are times when you might want to give your sneakers a refresher. Here is something easy to make to do the job:

### What you need:

- 2 white athletic socks
- 2 cups baking soda
- 2 rubber bands
- 2 six-inch pieces of string or yarn
- A piece of newspaper

### What to do:

- Cover your work area with a piece of newspaper.
- Fill the socks with the baking soda.
- Secure the top of each sock with a rubber band.
- Tie the string or yarn around the rubber band.
- Trim off any extra material from the sock cuff.
- Put these in your sneakers overnight to refresh them.



## Healthy Lunches

It is important for children to have nutritious lunches to keep them healthy and help them form good eating habits. Your child will copy you. Make sure you both get lots of vegetables and fruits, low-fat dairy foods, and whole grains. Try to include four of the five food groups each day. If you skip a food group one day, make sure to include it the next day. The food groups are vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy products, and proteins.

## Some Easy and Quick Tips

Working parents have busy schedules. Here are some ways to avoid hectic mornings:

- Pack lunches the night before.
- On weekends, fill some plastic baggies with single portions of crackers, dry breakfast cereal, raw or dried fruits and vegetables, diced ham, or cheese cubes. Prepare ahead for the whole week. Keep perishables in the refrigerator.
- Buy single serving-sized containers of fruit such as applesauce or peaches, yogurt, string cheese, or crackers to keep on hand.



## It's Better to Be Safe than Sorry!

The holidays are over. Now is a good time to check the Consumer Product Safety Commission's Web site for their list of recalled and unsafe toys. Take time to check their lists to make sure your child has safe toys. The CPSC Web site is [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

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