

Tips for Making Family Life Easier

Have Meals Together

One single mom with grown children says: I can say from personal experience as a single mom that my adult children still talk about how important it was that we all had breakfast and dinner together all through their school years. I made a point not to limit the foods that I served to the things I liked. I served foods that I did not like so they would not acquire my picky habits.

Another mother says: Kids love rituals. To me, what is most important, is taking time each day to sit down together for at least one meal together. I like to do this at the end of the day when I can reconnect with my kids and share the experiences of their day. It does not matter if it is a perfect meal either. Just turn off the TV and other distractions. Kids enjoy the connectedness.

Choices Are Limited and Not Always There

One single mom says: Less is more. Buy what you and your children need. Make sure that the treats you buy for your children are not a substitute for other things. The candy bars that you get them or those fancy clothes may really be meeting your own needs and not those of your children.

Another parent says: Tell your children that the kitchen closes at 7:30 pm. This keeps them from getting snacks after supper. Closing the kitchen also ends another distraction that can keep them up, so getting them to bed is easier.

Many moms say: Make a budget and stick to it. Plan for rent, food, clothes and the basics of life. Also, set aside some money for emergencies. Any amount will do. Keep a little money for treats, but remember that they are treats and not necessities.

Get Support When You Need It

A single mom says: Tell your children when you need a break. Ask them to be the maid for the day. They can pick up, get their pajamas out for the night and do many of the other things that you normally do for them. One mom says that this lets her children know that she also has human needs.

Another parent says: Let your children help with the chores. It will teach them life skills that they will use later on. Let them set the table, feed the dog, fold clothes, put away their toys, and make the food for a meal.

All moms agree: Find people that will support you. Work something out with other mothers who also have children. Find other parents who can share meals with your family, go on trips to the zoo or the park. Find other parents that you trust to exchange baby sitting times, carpool and who will be there to help out when you need them.

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From the class discussion today:

Write one way that you can handle your children's requests for chips, sodas, sweets, etc.:

Write one advantage to eating meals together as a family: _____

Write another parenting tip that you want to remember: _____

Other tips to remember

- Needs are different than wants. Your job is to meet your child's needs.
- Spend time with your children doing things that you both enjoy.
- Take time for yourself.