

Life, Work & Family

Monthly work/life news for UAW-Represented DaimlerChrysler Workers January 2005

Brought to you by the Circle of Life Committee

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Happy New Year!

Make This Your Year to Get Organized



How many times have you thought, "Next week I'll get myself organized and then I'll be able to work more efficiently" or "Next week, we're going to clear away the clutter, and this house will run more smoothly!" We know we need to make the time to do it but it seems like such a daunting task we tend to procrastinate or convince ourselves that it just isn't a priority right now. Well guess what? The time has come! This is going to be the time that you become clutter free and get organized and this is how you'll do it.

Here are two methods offered by organizedhome.com that will help us clear the clutter and keep it that way.

Try the Four Box method for trouble areas of your home:

Label three boxes: Put Away, Give Away/Sell and Storage. The third is the trashcan.

Go to one area of your home where clutter likes to gather and begin. Touch each item only once placing it in its proper box.

- Put Away items go back to their proper places.
- Give Away items should be placed in the garage to be picked up or in the trunk of your car to be delivered
- Create a file system where papers will be stored such as "Pending Household Issues" file, or "Receipts" file.
- Lastly empty the trashcan and don't look back!
- Move around your home to all areas of clutter and repeat!
- Try the Closet-Go-Around method for major overhauls!

Identify all the storage areas of your home

Identify storage needs

- Start at the front door with boxes, lots of them and place a box in front of each storage area.
- Move throughout the house placing items that don't belong where they are in your box. Circle the house with your catch and deliver each item to its proper home.
- Go to your next storage area, maybe a hall closet and empty it of all unassigned items, circle the house with your box and deliver the items home.

There! That's better! You're organized and in control. Now you can face the New Year with a clean slate, a clean office and a clean home.

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Long Distance Caregiving

If you live in another city or state from an older relative, you may find yourself providing long-distance care giving. Traveling back and forth to your older relative's home is challenging and may be an emotional and financial strain on you and your family. You may be feeling angry, guilty and exhausted and be anxious that you are not doing enough. These are normal feelings. It's important that you and your family stay in communication with your older relative on a regular, weekly basis. Your emotional support is very important. When you talk, listen for any changes in the way he or she speaks or engages with you.

During your visits it's important to make sure your older relative is:

- Eating properly and able to shop for groceries
- Keeping the house clean and free of clutter
- Washing clothes
- Safe in their home environment
- Paying bills on time
- Mentally and emotionally healthy



If you have concerns about your older relative's living situation, you need to be gentle but specific about what area or areas you think your older relative needs some help.

Remember, it is not always easy for older adults to accept help, so work slowly and try to agree on at least one area that needs help. Then begin with that service. Let them know you want to help them stay healthy, more comfortable or independent. It is important that your older relative feel in control and part of any decisions that are made about their care and living situation.

Discuss the future with your older relative and know their wishes. Plan for future needs. A Care Consultant from your Family Resource & Referral Program can help you find services and community programs that are available in your older relative's area.

If your older relative is able to stay in their own home, consider the following:

- Install higher wattage, non-glare light bulbs for better visibility
- Install timers on some interior and exterior lights
- Install nightlights in the bedroom, bathroom and hallways
- Inspect carpets for ragged edges and tack them down
- Mark the edges of steps for increased visibility
- Clear obstacles that your older relative might trip over
- Encourage your older relative to exercise their body and mind
- Install handrails, grab bars and nonskid strips in bathtubs and showers

Work with your older relative to create a support network of people who live close to them. Contact Your Family Resource and & Referral Program and speak with a Care Consultant. Together you can discuss the variety of care options and choose the best one for you and your family.

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Preventing the Spread of Germs



Gather a group of children together and you can bet that they will share more than toys. Each school year, children pass around billions of germs that cause colds, flus, and digestive problems. Fortunately, many infections are preventable. The editors of Scholastic's Parent & Child magazine asked clinical microbiologist Philip M. Tierno Jr., Ph.D., author of *The Secret Life of Germs*, for advice on how to keep contact clean and children healthy. The secret? Keep washing!

P&C: How do children spread germs?

Dr. Tierno: Contact spread is responsible for 80% of all infectious disease. There are two main types of contact spread: Direct person-to-person contact (touching or kissing) and indirect contact (surfaces, toys, doorknobs). Because of the way children play, they are particularly vulnerable to these types of transmission.

P&C: What about the school environment?

Dr. Tierno: Surfaces are hot spots: Drinking fountains, toilets, faucets, toys, and play tables. During my visits to preschools, I have found these spots to carry a lot of germs, including *Staphylococcus aureus* [food poisoning], *Streptococcus* [strep throat], and *Haemophilus influenza* [meningitis]. Also, I don't see enough tissue boxes in schools. If a child uses a tissue, or even sneezes into the crook of his arm, the germs get tied up in the cloth. You can reduce the number of active germs on a surface by 80% to 90% just by capturing them with a tissue or cloth.

P&C: What can teachers do to cut down on surface germs?

Dr. Tierno: More frequent cleaning, such as wiping table surfaces down after a big classroom activity, prior to snack time, and at the end of the day.

P&C: We all teach our children to wash their hands. What should parents watch for to be sure their kids are getting it right?

Dr. Tierno: Most kids do the same thing as their parents: a cursory wash. They run their hands under the water and they are done. The proper way is to use hand soap, lather up, and make sure to get the soap under the fingernails, on their knuckles, and in between their fingers. Then rinse off. It takes only 15 seconds and it is something that will help them the rest of their lives. And whenever possible, they should use antibacterial soap and water.

P&C: Can plain soap and water work just as well as antibacterial soap?

Dr. Tierno: No. A recent classroom study has shown a 50% decline in respiratory illness, a 35% decrease in doctor's visits, and a 50% drop in absenteeism when antibacterial soaps were used and surfaces were routinely cleaned with disinfectants.

P&C: Could extensive use of antibacterial soap give rise to resistant germs?

Dr. Tierno: There has not been one single case of antibiotics resistance that has been related to germicide. The real reason for resistance is improper distribution of antibiotics. Of the 150 million prescriptions given each year, 90 million are for antibiotics. Of those 90 million, an estimated 50 million are inappropriate or improper. That is where the problem is.

P&C: What is the best advice you can give to parents?

Dr. Tierno: As my mother used to say, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Parents need to teach children simple hygiene procedures. Sneeze or cough into a tissue, then throw the tissue away, and wash your hands. By using antibacterial soaps and wiping down play surfaces regularly, you can spare children, and yourself, lots of unnecessary colds and flus.

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What's New

Our easy-search database of the 1,600 child-care centers participating in the UAW-DaimlerChrysler National Child Care Network has just been updated to reflect the latest additions and changes. The Child Care Network is a negotiated benefit for UAW-represented DaimlerChrysler employees that offers them 10 percent tuition discounts at the highest rated child-care centers from coast to coast. Our database allows you to search the 1,600 child care providers state-by-state to find the name, address and phone number of one located near your home or workplace. Then, when you have identified a center that meets your needs, you contact that facility by phone to obtain the necessary registration materials and to enroll your child. To locate this database, visit our website at www.uawdcx.com, click on Circle of Life, and then click on Child Care Network.

From the entire Circle of Life Committee, we wish all of you a healthy and happy New Year!