

# Life, Work & Family

Monthly work/life news for UAW-Represented DaimlerChrysler Workers

May 2006

Brought to you by the Circle of Life Committee 1-800-809-4996

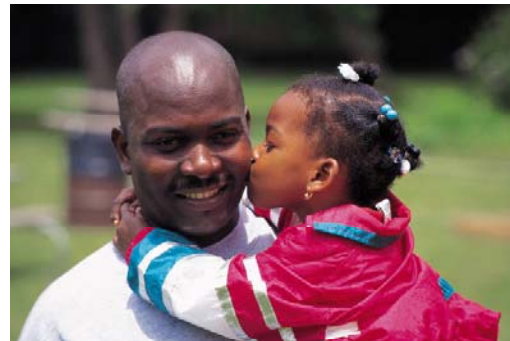
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## All in the Family -- When Relatives Provide Care

So your mom offered to watch the kids while you're at work. Great! Or is it? Sometimes using a relative as your childcare provider creates more tension than it is worth. On the other hand, your children are with someone you trust, and with someone who you know loves them. But often parents are so relieved to find a relative who can be their childcare provider that they don't go through the full evaluation process. Choosing a relative as your childcare provider can be a wonderful arrangement, or it can be a can of worms. Here are some things to consider before you take mom up on her offer.



### Where?

Let's say your Uncle Al, who raised two boys of his own, is willing to take care of your son Joey during the week. Sounds great -- not only will he be able to fix him lunch, but he can also take him outside for a game of catch. Now for the details -- is Uncle Al coming over to your house, or will you have to drop Joey at his place? If he's willing to come to your house, can you count on Uncle Al to be on time? If you take Joey to his place, how will that affect your commute?

If you plan to take your children to a relative's home, make sure their place has been childproofed. It is best to discuss this before the childcare arrangement is finalized. For example, Uncle Al might not have a safe place for his power tools, which means he'll have to come to your house.

Schedules are also best discussed in advance. If Uncle Al is coming to your place, he should know exactly when you need to leave for work. He should also have a clear understanding of when you'll be home.

### Money?

So, let's say you take mom (or Uncle Al for that matter) up on the offer to help -- are you going to pay her? She might not let you, but you might feel obligated. For many families, having a "free" caregiver is a much-needed economic bonus, or simply a built-in function of the extended family. But if you both agree that she'll accept payment, then how do you determine how much?

Again, this is one area that might be difficult to work out with a relative. For those who insist that their caregivers take some kind of reimbursement, relative or not, one option is to offer to "pay" with favors or gift certificates. You can also pay for specific items you know your relative would want. If you decide that money will be used for payment, make sure you both agree on the fee -- a good place to start is minimum wage. As with the location, this is one aspect of the care arrangement that should be hammered out well in advance.

### Parenting Philosophy?

This is likely to be either the easiest aspect of using a relative as your child care provider, or the most difficult. What do you do when you can't agree with mom about the use of television? How do you handle the fact that

Uncle Al just doesn't seem to share your views on parenting? In some families, having similar views is a given -- after all, your mom raised you, right? For others, however, generation gaps or differences of opinion can lead to heated family arguments on basic questions, let alone how much time Joey can spend on the computer.

The most important thing is to be clear about what you expect from a child care situation, whether the child care provider is your mother or a nanny you just hired. Make sure all the bases are covered ahead of time, so that you can make your decision based on good sense, in addition to gut reaction.

*Source: Find Care Now*

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## Benefits for Grandchildren



More and more parents are finding themselves raising grandchildren. Social Security will pay benefits to grandchildren if benefits are not payable on the work record of a parent.

### Grandchildren

If a child is not receiving benefits from a parent when the grandparent retires, becomes disabled, or dies, the grandchild may then be able to qualify for benefits if certain conditions are met. Generally, the biological parents of the child must be deceased or disabled, or the grandchild must be legally adopted by the grandparent.

In addition, the grandchild must have begun living with the grandparent before age 18 and received at least one half of his or her support from the grandparent for the year before the month the grandparent became entitled to retirement or disability insurance benefits, or died. Also, the natural parent(s) of the child must not be making regular contributions to his or her support.

If the grandchild was born during the one-year period, the grandparent must have lived with and provided at least one-half of the child's support for substantially all of the period from the date of birth to the month the grandparent became entitled to benefits.

The grandchild may qualify for benefits under these circumstances, even if he or she is a step-grandchild. However, if the grandparents are already receiving benefits, they would need to adopt the child for it to qualify for benefits.

Social Security has a toll-free number that operates from 7AM to 7PM, Monday to Friday: **1-800-772-1213** If you have a touch-tone phone, recorded information and services are available 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call our toll-free "TTY" number, **1-800-325-0778**, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Monday through Friday. Please have your Social Security number handy when you call us.

*Source: Social Security Administration*

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## Adoption from an Animal Shelter

Animal shelters are your best source when looking for a pet. Not only do they have a great selection of adult animals for adoption, but they also have kittens and puppies, even purebred animals. In fact, on average, purebreds account for about 25% to 30% of a shelter's dog population. Many pets at your local shelter are waiting for new homes because they were obtained by someone with unrealistic expectations of the time,



effort, and money required to sustain a lifelong relationship with their pet. National figures indicate that about half of the animals in shelters must be euthanized for lack of homes. Animals at your local shelter are eager to find a new home and are just waiting for someone like you.

You can depend on responsible shelters to screen the animals for sound health and temperament. When animals are relinquished by owners, the shelter staff makes every attempt to collect a thorough history of that pet. Then, while caring for animals, staff and volunteers try to learn as much as they can about these animals as well as those who come to the shelter as strays.

Don't be discouraged if, when you first visit the shelter, there are no animals of the breed or type you want. Shelters receive new animals every day. Your shelter may also have a waiting list and can call you when an animal matching your preference becomes available. Before choosing your pet, you can even speak with an adoption counselor about whether your choice of a particular type or breed will be best for you.

In an effort to make good matches between people and animals and to place pets in lifelong homes, many shelters provide adoption counseling and follow-up assistance, such as pet parenting and dog-training classes, medical services, and behavior counseling. Or they may be able to refer you to providers of these services.

Another advantage is that shelter adoption fees are usually much less than an animal's purchase price at a pet store or breeder. And your new pet is more likely to be vaccinated, dewormed, and spayed or neutered. To locate your local animal shelter, contact your EAP, check the Yellow Pages under "animal shelter," "animal control," or "humane society."

Many shelters have web sites on which they display the animals they have available for adoption. Some sites allow you to download adoption forms and read about responsible pet care. A growing number of shelters also promote their web sites, and the animals they have for adoption, on sites such as Pets 911, Petfinder, and 1-800-Save-A-Pet.com.

*Source: Humane Society of the United States. (n.d). Adoption from an Animal Shelter.. Retrieved March 17, 2005, from [http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet\\_adoption\\_information/adopting\\_from\\_an\\_animal\\_shelter.html](http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_adoption_information/adopting_from_an_animal_shelter.html)*

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## What's New – The Homework Helpline

This month the UAW-DaimlerChrysler Family Resource & Referral Program would like to introduce our newest service: **The Homework Helpline!**

The Homework Helpline is a **FREE** benefit that is available to you and your children. This program assists your children with their homework. It's simple to use too! You or your child can be connected to a live teacher in the academic area needed, by simply calling the 1-800 number below.

This service is available to all UAW represented DaimlerChrysler employees and their families. You can access the program Monday – Friday from 4pm to 9pm. Just let the consultant know which topic you need help with, along with your plant name.

# UAW-DaimlerChrysler Family Resource & Referral Program

For more information contact your Family Resource & Referral Program and speak with a Care Consultant at 1-800-809-4996

## **Homework Helpline 1-877-500-2345**



**Need some help navigating around life's little (and not so little) challenges?**

Contact your Family Resource & Referral Program at **1-800-809-4996** and speak with a Care Consultant to receive information to help you balance your work and life issues.