



Work & Family Matters

Inside this issue:

Transitions Between Work and Home	1
Did You Know.....	1
Summer Care Tips for You and Your Pets ...	2
Increasing Physical Activity	2
If Your Grandchild Has Special Needs	3
Traveling with Teens.....	3

August 2006



Did You Know ...

- 6 in 10 Americans have had personal experiences with adoption, meaning that they, a family member, or a close friend was adopted, had adopted a child, or had placed a child for adoption.

Source: Evan B. Donaldson
Adoption Institute Survey, 1997

- 64% of mothers with children under six years of age and 60% of mothers with children under two are working.

Source: U.S. House of
Representatives, 2004

- The brain of a toddler has formed 1000 trillion working connections by the end of the third year and is twice as active as that of a college student.

Source: University of
Wisconsin—Cooperative
Extension Family Living
Education, "As They Grow"
Series, July–August, Year 3



Transitions Between Work and Home

Do you ever feel like you are leading a double life? Are your responsibilities at work and at home totally different? If your answer is yes, you are not alone. At no other time is change so keenly felt as the transition between your work and home environment at the end of the workday. This time of day has been called the "whirlwind hour."

Transitions are times of change. Often, during these times, our bodies are at the right place at the right time, but our minds are not. Our minds have not made the transition and are still trying to catch up. As your family returns home, everyone has special needs to be met. These needs often take families down a collision course that leads to increased stress and emotional outbreaks.

The more time you have to make transitions, the easier it will be. A hurried transition is always hard. Here are some tips to help relieve "hurry-up-itis."

Learn to manage your time so that you have completed your tasks and can leave work at the appointed hour.

Plan some catch-up time so that if something unexpected happens, you'll have the time to deal with it.

Learn to separate your personal and work lives. Don't take your personal life to work and don't take your work home.

Use commuting time to make the transition between work and home.

Change clothes immediately after coming home from work. After you shed your work clothes, you're ready to face the demands at home.

Involve your spouse and children in household chores. As children complete household tasks, they learn more about taking responsibility. They also feel like a valued member of the family.

Talk to your spouse and your children about your feelings. Good communication is important in strong families.

Source: Adapted from Ohio State University CES WorkSite Series Fact Sheet Number 11, "Coming Home."

Summer Care Tips for You and Your Pets

Summer is a time for both you and your pet to enjoy the sunshine and the outdoors; but along with the fun, the season also brings up situations that can endanger your pet. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) offers these tips:

- In nice weather, you may be tempted to take your pet with you in the car when you travel or do errands. During warm weather, the inside of your car can reach 120 degrees in a matter of minutes, even if you're parked in the shade. Dogs and cats can't perspire and can only dissipate heat by panting and through the pads of their feet.
- Pets that are left in hot cars even briefly can suffer from heat exhaustion, heat stroke, brain damage, and can possibly die. Even an air-conditioned car with the motor off isn't healthy for your pet.
- To avoid any chance that your pet will succumb to the heat of a car this summer, play it safe by leaving your pet cool and refreshed at home while you're on the road.
- If you do happen to see a pet in a car alone during the hot summer months, alert the management of the store where the car is parked. If the owner does not return promptly, call local animal control or the police department immediately.
- Summer is often a time when people fertilize their lawns and work in their gardens. But beware: plant food, fertilizer, and insecticides can be fatal if your pet ingests them. In addition, more than 700 plants can produce toxic substances in sufficient amounts to cause harmful effects in animals.
- Provide plenty of water and shade for your pets while they're enjoying the great outdoors so they can stay cool.

Source: Permission granted from The Humane Society of the United States, <http://www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care>



Increasing Physical Activity

Choose activities that you enjoy and can do regularly.

Fitting activity into a daily routine can be easy—such as taking a brisk walk to and from the parking lot.

Or, join an exercise class. Keep it interesting by trying something different on alternate days.

What's important is to be active most days of the week and make it part of your daily routine.

For example, to reach a 30-minute goal for the day, walk the dog for 10 minutes before and after work, and add a 10-minute walk at lunchtime.

Or, swim three times a week and take a yoga class on the other days.

Make sure to do at least 10 minutes of the activity at one time as shorter bursts of activity will not have the same health benefits.

To be ready at any time, keep some comfortable clothes and a pair of walking or running shoes in the car and at work.

Source: The United States Department of Agriculture, <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/physical_activity_tips_print.html>

Traveling with Teens

Sometimes they're moody, even rude. They crave lots of independence. To be successful, traveling with adolescents requires planning and flexibility.

Here are some useful tips ...

City visits are great for teens who couldn't care less about beautiful scenery and don't relish the idea of spending hours on end alone with their parents.

Choose activities that will engage your teen, even if it means you are skipping a few popular attractions.

Plan at least one activity a day around your teen's interests.

Many indoor sports arenas, outdoor amusement parks, and water parks cater to teen tastes.

For older teens, a visit to an urban college campus can help them learn what college "feels like" and may provide access to concerts and entertainment at affordable prices.

Choose a hotel that puts you in the center of the action when you walk out the front door, with plenty of easy dining and browsing opportunities nearby.

Look for hotels with rooms that will allow your teen a little privacy, even if it's just a fold-out couch in an alcove.

Swimming pools and spas are still attractive to most teens, as are hotel shops and restaurants.

Source: Adapted with express permission of Parenthood.com Web site, <<http://www.parenthood.com>>, Ronnie Mae Weiss and Marlene Ellin, authors.



If Your Grandchild Has Special Needs

Every grandparent hopes and prays that a new grandchild will be healthy. We count our grandson's fingers and toes after he is born. We keep an eye on our granddaughter to make sure she is developing "normally."

Most of the time, we breathe a deep sigh of relief because our grandchild is just fine. But sometimes there are challenges. We may find out that the newest addition to our family has a disability. This news can be very hard to hear. We feel shocked and saddened. We are angry. We find it hard to understand how this could have happened to our family. We ache for our grandchild—and for the child's parents.

These feelings are painful. As grandparents, we need to take time to grieve the loss we are feeling. And then we need to get busy. We have many special gifts to offer our families. Right now, they need us more than ever.

Tips for Dealing with Disabilities

You may be helping the child's parents cope with the child's special needs or you may be raising your grandchild yourself. In either case, you can't take away the pain that you or your grandchild's parents are feeling. You can't change what has happened to your grandchild. But you can offer your support to the child and to the rest of the family.

- Show your grandchild every day that you love him for the special person he is.
- Listen when the child's parents need to talk.
- Support the decisions the parents are making, even if you don't agree with all of them.
- Show that you are interested in the special programs and therapies they have found for the child.
- Offer to help with household chores.

These children need extra support. But they can be happy and thrive—and be a special gift to their families!

Source: Adapted from AARP Web site, <http://www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/caring_grandchild/a2004-12-20-grandparents-special-needs.html>