

# Health & Wellness Corner

September 2021

## Back-to-school tips for working parents



Summer vacation often gives families more time than usual to connect. However, as the summer comes to an end, families begin to think about sending their children back to school. The return of school schedules, homework, sports and other extracurricular activities can often bump family time to the back burner.

With the upcoming school year hopefully looking more normal than last year's, here are some tips for tackling back-to-school time as a working parent.

### Make being involved a priority

As a working parent, it might be difficult for you to make it to every event, but there are probably a few that you can commit to. Tell your kids which events you're going to attend – and then make sure you keep your promise. Whether it's chaperoning a field trip twice a year or attending the annual holiday party at your kids' school, consistency and support are key.

### Say "yes" – but not to everything

While it's important to stay involved, it's simply impossible to chair every committee at your kids' school. Select one or two causes that are most important to you and your kids and commit to those. Setting unrealistic expectations about what you can sign up to do – on top of taking care of your home, family and career – will only lead to disappointment and frustration for everyone.

## Connect daily

Make a point to connect daily with each of your kids – even if that means helping your son with his math homework or tucking your daughter into bed. What's more, setting a special time each week or month to share a favourite activity with your kids one-on-one can go a long way in helping to maintain your bond. Make sure you keep lines of communication open as your kids face challenges or struggles they need to discuss with you.

## Strike that elusive work-life balance

Even pre-COVID, many workplaces allowed employees to work remotely on certain days. Now, for many jobs, it's a default way of working. If you are able to work from home even some of the time, you gain some flexibility in being available for your kids during school hours.

## Maintain your interests

Try not to stretch yourself too thin between work, home and family that you lose sight of your own interests and well-being. Set personal goals for yourself – maybe it's learning a new language or starting a new hobby. Take time each week to work towards your interests. Taking care of yourself enables you to provide the best care and support to your family.

The bottom line – don't be too hard on yourself. Every parent you see at the PTA meeting, band concert or sports practice faces the same struggles as you do. As a working parent, you balance the added challenge of your career. Strive to find little ways each day to connect with your children and show them you support them and care about what's important in their lives.

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