

## TIP SHEET: **Balancing Work and Family**

*For the parent*

Being a parent these days is one of the hardest jobs in the world, so trying to manage a job on top of being a parent is twice as hard. Every parent wants to succeed at work and at home.

Here are some tips to help balance being a great parent while working:

- If possible, stagger your workdays with your parenting partner's schedule so that you can decrease the time your child spends in childcare. Even in a great childcare environment, small children wear out by the end of the day and need time at home with mom or dad.
- Make your health a priority. Between alarm clocks, homework, traffic, deadlines, and dinner, parents may forget to factor in their own well-being.
- Factor in fitness. If exercise looms like a chore you'd rather cross off your to-do list, be a kid again and play with your child; turn up the music and dance or jump rope. Regular activity will reward you with more energy, a better appearance, and a happier mood.
- Get your rest. Scheduling a regular bedtime free of distractions will help you and your child function at your best.
- Reserve regular "me time." While your child is napping or at a school play rehearsal, for example, use the hour to call a friend or curl up and read in a cozy chair instead of doing dishes during downtime. Ask a family member or friend to babysit while you attend a yoga class, sip coffee at a café, or browse the shops in town.
- Organize childcare you're happy with. If you're worrying about your child's health and happiness while you're at work, there's no way you'll be able to do your job properly. If you're lucky enough to have a support network of family and/or friends living



nearby, make an informal agreement that you can call on them to help if your child is ill.

- Do not feel guilty about leaving your child with your spouse or at childcare.
- Get organized ahead of time. Pack yours and your children's bags and get everyone's clothes ready the night before work, school or daycare.
- Cherish the good things about working (besides the obvious financial ones). It could be something as simple and everyday as having a good laugh with coworkers, drinking a coffee without having a small child around, having your boss praise you or simply having five minutes to read your book on the bus.
- Learn to recognize the difference between a true emergency and things that can wait a few hours. It is not always necessary to rush right out and take care of mistakes made by your family members. A true emergency like a sick child is one thing, but remember that some things do not always need to be taken care of right now. Some things, like a forgotten school item, can be taken care of in a few hours.