

Parenting Together

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Finding your Work-Life Fit

Did you know that International Women's Day is on March 8th this year? This is a day to recognize many of the economic, social, and cultural achievements that women have made over the years. As women continue to make a positive impact in the workforce (and beyond), it is important to consider work-life balance and how this often means something different for every person and family.

Many businesses are working to shift toward a model of work-life balance that can accommodate the many demands of the home and work environments for mothers and fathers. In doing this, the term itself (work-life balance) is being questioned. Some researchers propose that work-life fit is a more realistic term. "Work-life fit" recognizes that sometimes work and life do not balance equally. Work-life fit is dynamic and evolving and represents a constant flex between work life and home life.



"...Don't worry too much about "balance." Look for ways that can make all the things you care about fit together, like a puzzle." - Allison Downey

Have you ever enjoyed an excellent start to a morning, only to find yourself saying a tearful goodbye to your crying child as you head off to work? It can be really hard for you and your children when you have to leave. They may not understand why you have to leave for the day, and you may not always feel motivated to get to your job. It's not always easy, but there are a few strategies you can use to help.

A Good Goodbye

Start your day off right by creating a 'good' goodbye. Whether you are dropping your child off at daycare/school, or leaving him with a trusted individual, use these tips to set a positive tone for the day!

- Minimize the morning rush
- Explain what will happen during the day - both for your child and you
- Establish a routine

Prepare lunches and outfits the night before so you can protect special morning time with your child without the rush. Explain what she should expect for the day (this helps generate excitement for the next activity!), and establish a solid morning routine so your child isn't surprised when you say goodbye.

The Book Nook

When Mama Comes Home Tonight
By Eileen Spinelli

Don't Forget I Love You
By Miriam Moss

*I Love My Daddy Because /
Quiero a mi papa Porque*
By Laurel Gaylord



Oregon State
University

Find Your Fit

Work-life fit means something different for everyone so it is important not to compare your decisions with others. We also need to go easy on ourselves when we make difficult choices about work and life. Many parents struggle with feelings of guilt for their choices, but it's important to give yourself credit and find acceptance for your decisions.

Remember, this is a dynamic, evolving fit between work and home life, and that's ok!

When thinking about your ideal work-life fit, ask yourself:

What is my ideal work-life fit?

What changes can I make to work towards that?

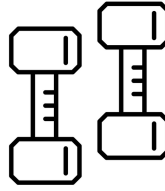


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orparenting.org

Work-life 'Fitness'

Given that work-life fit is always evolving, sometimes we need to make more of an effort to find our fit. Here are a few ideas to help you 'work out' your work-life fit.



At work

- Learn company policies on family leave and flexibility
- Set a hard cut off time for when you will leave for the day
- Keep lists of your tasks so you can maximize efficiency while you are at work
- Take your breaks

It may seem impossible to find your work-life fit because there is no perfect answer.

The more you can find acceptance and be present in both your home and work life, the better off you and your family will be.

At home

- Put your phone away and be present while at home
- Ask for help from family and friends when you need it
- Share household responsibilities
- Set an example for eating right, staying active, and getting enough sleep

Take some time this month to think about your own work-life fit and what changes you would make to work toward your ideal fit.

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References

- Mental Health America
<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/work-life-balance>