

The Role of Playing Mom and Dad as a Single Mom

The pressure is on. You have to go to work, drive the kids to soccer or music lessons, make dinner, get the homework done, pay the bills and clean the house. Now it's time to put the kids to bed and do it all again tomorrow. Overwhelming isn't it. It's difficult to be everything for your kids: provider, disciplinarian, tutor, and be the best loving parent you can be all while trying to care for yourself physically and emotionally. It can be done.

The key is organization and flexibility.

Running the household:

Prioritize your to-do list. Be sure to have an organized calendar of tasks to be done daily and stick to it understanding that with children, some flexibility may be necessary.

The paperwork alone can be overwhelming. Some ideas to stay on top of bills, school work, and personal correspondence are:

1. Make them portable. Get a binder that you can bring to karate practice and pay your bills. Perhaps you can write a letter or look over homework.
2. Set a specific time each day or week to sit down and deal with it all. Try your best to stick to it.

Earning a Living:

It is important to have a good balance between your work and home life. There are many employers out there that are "family friendly". Some even offer flex-time or opportunities to work from home. If your current employer is not particularly family friendly, you are most likely to be unhappy.

Involving your children:

You are a team and as they say, there is no "I" in team. Giving children age appropriate responsibilities gives them a sense of inclusion, purpose and accomplishment. Make a chore chart and give rewards for a job well done. Children as young as age two can clean up their own toys and do simple tasks. They learn best by a good example. Have the children involved in getting themselves ready for the morning by asking them to lay out their clothes and pack their snacks and folders into their backpacks.

You are not alone:

Lean on your friends or family. "It takes many hands..." and you need all the help you can get. Offer carpooling swaps for your children's friends. They drop off and you pick up. Chances are, they too, would enjoy the extra time to be able to get something done.

You could also join a support group for single parents. There are many groups out there that offer "tele-support" or online support so you wouldn't even need to leave your house.

Keep your expectations in perspective:

If something slips by you or is not as clean as you would like, let it go. Stay flexible and don't beat yourself up. The laundry will still be there when you get to it.

The importance of self care:

You do so much for your children and everyone else throughout the day. You must be able to fit in some time to yourself and regroup. Take time to enjoy your children and treat yourself well, even if it's just a well deserved bubble bath after the kids go to bed. After all, if you take better care of yourself, the better you will be able to take care of your family.

Think positive:

Make sure **every day** there is at least one moment that you are smiling with your children. Whether it's appreciating something silly they are doing, or simply telling them a joke and making them laugh. This will go a long way towards a positive relationship and how your children perceive you and your outlook.

Patti Handy, Money Coach, is a CTA Certified Life Coach with nearly 25 years in the banking arena, including 6 years as a Sr. Mortgage Advisor. With Patti's unique combination of experiences, she helps clients take control of their money matters, create a wealth plan, consolidate debt and improve credit scores. Within a safe environment, she assists in empowering clients with the knowledge and tools necessary to move forward. Visit her website, www.wisdomwithinyou.com to download a free special report, "The First 5 Steps to Financial Freedom".