

## Make Balance between Work and Family a Reality this Fall

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As September rolls around, the regular summer work routine shifts. The pace of business picks up, traffic becomes more congested and family commitments need to be juggled with work.

Suddenly, in addition to scheduling that important meeting, you're also planning carpool, picking the kids up from practice and making sure you have enough energy left over to help them with homework.

In today's business world, where 78 per cent of families are comprised of dual-income earners, the meaning of balance between work and home life is becoming more important than ever.

According to Ellen Galinsky, president of the Families and Work Institute, "The workplace today is not our father's workplace. No longer are whistles that signal the start and end of the workday commonplace. No longer are photos of our family members at work the sole symbol of our lives outside of work. No longer is loyalty to employers an automatic promise of a job for life."

According to *When Work Works*, a study by the Families and Work Institute, funded by IBM, 67 per cent of employees say they don't have enough time for their children, 63 per cent say they don't have enough time with their spouses and 55 per cent don't even have enough time for themselves! With these figures in mind, it's not surprising that 61 per cent of employees, both men and women, want to work fewer hours than they do.

Here's one last figure. Almost half of today's employees feel pulled and stretched thin between their responsibilities at work and home. In Ellen Galinsky's book *Ask the Children*, she states that a nationally representative group of children ages eight to 18 were asked for their number one wish to improve their lives. The largest proportion wished that their parents were less tired and stressed.

If you belong to any of these percentages listed above, then the term "balance" is probably even more relevant to your life now than ever before. Fortunately, a little bit of organization can help.

### **1. Plan your week carefully**

- Schedule time in your day for interruptions, emergencies and responding to email
- Schedule time to work on items that fulfill your professional and personal goals & objectives
- Remember to schedule time for commuting and driving family members to their appointments

### **2. Put the FAST System to work**

- Clutter is just postponed decisions, so use the FAST System (File it, Act on it, Schedule it, Toss it) to make those decisions quickly and easily
- The FAST System isn't just for work, use it in your home to clean out the clutter

### **3. Create a message center in your house**

- By making an area in the kitchen your message center, you can easily stay connected with everyone in the family and be aware of each other's schedule
- Use one calendar for all of the family activities and assign tasks and priorities for each family member. Just check the calendar every morning or evening to see what you are responsible for
- Use the message center to hold all important phone messages or family messages for each other

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