



BALANCING WORK & FAMILY



All of us must allocate 24 hours a day to the activities of life. How well we balance responsibilities with doing things we truly enjoy directly affects our quality of life. It also helps manage stress. Are you satisfied with your balance of time between work and family?

If you answered “no,” you are not alone. Achieving balance with work and family is an ongoing process of juggling responsibilities at work and the needs of family members. These needs change over time. The key to success is stepping back and periodically analyzing how things are going. You can then decide if changes are needed. The result will be enjoying your life more and being in harmony with the things you value most.

Take the following quiz to see if you could use some re-evaluation of work and family balance. If you answer “no” to any question, you may benefit from some of the steps that follow.

Work and Family Balance Quiz —

- Do you successfully allocate time in your day to the things you want to do with your family?
- Can you participate in meaningful activities with family without feeling anxious or talking about work?
- Do you participate in family activities without the gnawing feeling of so much work being left undone?

10 Steps Toward Balance with Work and Family —

1. Work and Family Balance is a Conscious Decision. Work and family don’t “balance” automatically. Achieving balance is an ongoing process. Understanding this can reduce frustration and help you act to gain control.

2. Write Down Family Goals. Family needs change over time. Opportunities to build a tree house for the kids or participate in a new family pastime don’t last forever. Decide what is important and write it down. Assign a date, and make these goals “absolutely-will-happens.”

3. Stick to Your Values. Sometimes it can be tough to make a choice between a family and a work activity. Knowing where you stand on your values can make tough choices easier.

4. Recognize that Imbalance is Sometimes Inevitable. It is important to recognize that jobs and responsibilities are important and that they sometimes take priority.

5. Revisit Your Schedule. When your work schedule changes, new opportunities may become available to participate in family activities. Claim the high ground!

6. Recognize the Benefits of Balance. Balancing work and family has pay-offs for children, home relationships, and everyone’s future happiness. Recognizing this can help you keep balance in mind.

7. Manage Distractions and Procrastination. Working long hours causes stress that sometimes finds relief naturally through workplace distractions and procrastination. If you are at the office for 12 hours, do you really work only 10? If you are searching for more family time, it might be found here.

8. Discuss Expectations and Responsibilities. When one family member is taking on too many responsibilities at home, resentments can build. Periodically discussing the perceptions of others can provide the awareness you need to consider opportunities and choices for work and family balance.

9. Organize Your Work Better. Improving your delegation and time-management skills can buy you time needed for family life. Learning how to put work down, say “no,” and let go of workplace worries are skills that are learned through practice.

10. What the EAP Can Do. Despite these suggestions, improving balance of work and family may be a lot easier said than done. The EAP can help you find sources for defining priorities, acquiring assertiveness skills, making tough decisions, or even identifying family goals that you want to pursue so you can look back and say, “I did it.”

If You Work and Have Kids... DEA's LifeCare® Program Can Help With Parenting Information and Child Care Assistance!

Just log on to the LifeCare web site to:

- Search for providers on your own, including child care centers, family child care homes, au pair agencies, in-home care agencies, schools, and more using the "Find a Provider" feature
- Browse the extensive child care and parenting library and download printable guides and evaluation checklists
- Participate in on demand e-seminars on a variety of child care and parenting topics
- Listen to quick audio tips to assist with topical child care and parenting issues
- Download state-by-state child care regulations
- Access a wealth of safety information, from safe-proofing the home to poison prevention to Internet safety and beyond
- Order Medela®-brand breast pumps at discounted prices
- Access content and tools to help you care for a child with special needs by visiting the "Special Needs" section.
- Search for schools in your area or nationwide, by clicking on the "Education" area of the site.
- Access effective study and homework tips, learn how to save for and prepare your child for college—and more!

LifeCare—an agency-paid benefit—provides expert guidance, educational materials, and qualified referrals to assist you with child care and parenting responsibilities whether you have an infant, teen or any aged child in-between.

Simply call LifeCare 24/7 to speak with an educated child care specialist who will assess your needs and send you pre-screened referrals to child care providers (with confirmed openings!) that meet your unique needs (in terms of budget, location, care needs, etc.). Plus, a specialist will send you educational guides to help you understand your options and evaluate potential providers.

And don't forget, **LifeCare's Backup Care Program** can help you plan ahead for breakdowns in your regular child care (and elder care) arrangements. LifeCare will help you locate and pay for temporary care for children when your regular care arrangements fall through. It's free to pre-register and you only pay a small co-pay on the days when backup care is needed.

LifeCare—brought to you by DEA's Employee Assistance Program—is provided at no cost to you!

Consultation with LifeCare specialists is not meant as a substitute for guidance from a licensed physician or mental health professional in matters of physical and/or emotional health. For answers to medical questions please contact your health care provider. For consultation on mental health issues, please contact the DEA Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-275-7460

Access LifeCare Today!

- Log on to www.lifecare.com and look for the "Member Login" box.
- Do not click on the "NEW USERS CLICK HERE" link. Simply enter Screen Name: **usdoj** and Password: **dea** (all lower case).
- For assistance logging on, contact the Help Desk at 888-604-9565.
- You can also call **800-873-4636** at any time of the day or night for free educational guides and personalized referrals (call 800-873-1322 for TTY/TDD service).

Free Child Safety Kit!

Caring for a toddler? Call toll-free to request your Child Safety Kit—it's loaded with free products and helpful info. Limits apply, call for details.