



BalanceWorks® Newsletter

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Child and Elder Care

Statistics show that nearly 10 million Americans are a part of the “Sandwich Generation”. Individuals in the Sandwich Generation are characterized by caring for both their children and their aging parents. This is a fairly recent phenomenon, developing from elderly people living longer and young adults starting families later. Navigating the demands of caretaking for your parents and children along with balancing a career can be a hefty burden. Managing this can be more reasonable when you have a few details in place and a support system to lean on.

Caring for your Parents:

Careful and advanced planning will enable you to make the smoothest transition into the role of your parent’s caretaker. It is helpful to talk to your parents about the future well before they become ill, incapacitated or a medical emergency arises.

Documentation and Decisions:

When caring for an aging parent it’s important to make sure that

all legal and financial concerns are handled appropriately. Ensure that your parents have a will and living will in case life sustaining medical care is needed. Speak with them about designating a healthcare proxy. If a health crisis arises it is so important to be able to jump into action on your parent’s behalf instead of being tied up with legalities. Also, find out if they have long term care insurance or enough savings to cover the costs of a Home Health Aide or a nursing home if the need should occur. If your parents will not be able to cover this cost, you may want to start a savings account just in case a condition develops where this is the only option.

Medical and Financial Concerns:

Become acquainted with your parent’s physicians. Doctors are very busy and may rush appointments or overlook symptoms. Therefore it’s incredibly important for your parent’s doctor to see that their elderly patient has an advocate. Ensure that your parent has designated a durable power of attorney. This person has the ability to make financial decisions on their

For more information or support for the Sandwich Generation contact the work/life experts at **BalanceWorks®** by calling:

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behalf should they become unable to do so. They can handle matters for your parent such as paying bills, managing assets or selling their home.

Providing Long Distance Care:

Over 1/3 of all caretakers support their parents from a distance. It's important to have a list of important phone numbers on hand so you can quickly act on your parents behalf. Similarly, make sure all people involved in your parent's care have your number. Establish a local support network and ask them to check in from time to time and keep you aware of living conditions. It is critical to call your parent on a consistent basis; keeping in regular contact will enable you to provide much better care.

Caring for Your Children:

Raising your children while taking care of your parent can be a daunting task. Unfortunately, your children can sometimes get lost in the shuffle. If your parent is especially frail or ill and requires a great deal of attention and time, your children may begin to feel neglected. However, there are steps you can take to help your children feel nurtured.

Quality Time – Regardless of how busy you are, set aside special time to spend with your children without their grandparent present.

Listen Carefully – Take time to listen to your children's concerns, while also being honest about why you can't spend as much time with them.

Encourage Participation – It's acceptable to ask age appropriate children to help out around the house. However, do not make them responsible for helping with your parent's caretaking, unless they truly want to.

Moving In:

If your parent(s) must move in with you, carve out space in the house that they can call their own. Your house will feel a bit cramped with 3 generations all living under one roof. Giving your parents their own space will allow them to maintain a level of privacy and it will help your children to not feel crowded out of their own home. Finally, children respond best to routine. After your parent moves in try to establish a daily schedule, so that your children feel they have returned to a sense of normalcy.

Caring for Yourself:

Finally, make sure to take care of yourself! Your health and well being have to be a priority. Make sure you have a support system. Don't be afraid to lean on a spouse, partner, friend or relative. A sympathetic and caring ear can do wonders for your piece of mind. Most importantly, remember to reserve time for yourself. It is imperative to occasionally indulge yourself and partake in activities that you enjoy.

Balancing your career with your familial responsibilities can be daunting, but there are resources to assist you.

For more detailed information download our Sandwich Generation White Paper.

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