- Avoid doing for children what they can do for themselves, as long as it's age appropriate.

- Rather than spending time and energy on coaxing children to eat, know what foods they dislike and try to prepare what they do like.

- Develop routines that help children get ready for bed (cleanup time, brush teeth, story time, bedtime).

- If children are not sleepy, tell them they must stay in the room and read a book or do quiet activities until lights out.

- Have a TV cutoff time.

- Hold weekly family meetings.

- Designate special times with each child for your partner and for yourself.

- Rotate toys monthly. Use shelves to display toys rather than a toy box.

The Homecoming

Keep the following tips in mind.

Commuting time.

The time it takes to get from work to home can be very helpful in making the transition. Some people use this time to finish thinking about what's been happening at work and to shift gears and make plans for responsibilities at home. When they get home, they are mentally organised to get started. Others use commuting time to listen to music or read a book. Commuting time can be an hour in traffic or a 10-minute walk to work. This time can be devoted to a pleasant activity without feeling guilty about home or work demands.

Helping each other.

Good communication is important between family members about what needs to be done and who needs to do it. An open discussion will help each member understand the other people's roles and feelings. Children can also be given tasks that will help the family accomplish what needs to be done in a relatively short time. This sharing of tasks not only teaches children responsibility but also gives them a sense of belonging.

Changing clothes.

The simple action of changing clothes can make the transition from work to home easier. A different set of clothes can make you feel like you're finally home since work and home often require different roles and behaviours. Being dressed for the job at hand makes the transition complete.

A quick snack.

A nutritious snack will help relieve family members' hunger. With a little planning, this snack could be the first course of your dinner -- salad, soup, crackers and cheese. This snack will give you extra time to prepare a family meal.

Source: North Dakota State University, The Internet

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