



Have You Heard?

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Home Economist

ALLOW CHILDREN TO BE MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPERS

Mothers who work outside the home (57% of mothers with preschoolers are employed) find their time stretched to the limit by their responsibilities at work and at home. The full-time Homemaker also does many things that take time away from her children.

How can mothers do all they need to do and still find time for teaching their children?

A mother's best helper is her own children. Sometimes mother's little helper gets in the way, makes a mess or takes extra time. It is often easier just to do a job yourself, especially for the mother working outside the home. She may spend her limited time in

play with the child and do housework after the child is in bed.

If you are guilty of doing your housework after your child is in bed, ask yourself if you are just trying to get the job done rather than prepare your child for successful life roles.

Start your children doing little jobs, like holding the baby correctly. Slowly work them up to more difficult jobs. You will be surprised at how this will help bring your children closer to you and how it will build their sense of self-worth.

You may be thinking, that sounds good, but isn't it hard to get children to work around the house or farm?

Kids have a natural desire to help. However, sometimes in our desire for our children to learn to do things well, we are overly critical of the efforts they make at first. Try to point to the good work children do and keep criticism to a minimum. Reward their efforts even if the results were not up to

your adult standards at first. Too much criticism may kill the natural desire your children have to learn and help. Praise and appreciation for their efforts will encourage their interest in working.

The attitude you have toward work will significantly influence the attitude your children develop. In recent years we've heard a lot about the "workaholic." But we probably have many more loafers than "workaholics" in our society.

Parents should be more concerned about teaching children how to work and take pride in their accomplishments than about how to relax. Obviously, balance is important.

In many ways, school is a child's first job. Parents who foster attendance, responsibility for assignments and the expectation to do one's best are developing attitudes in their children that will prepare them to be productive, successful, happy workers.

In addition to school-age work experiences appropriate for a

child's age, hobbies can help a child learn to enjoy work and constructive activity.

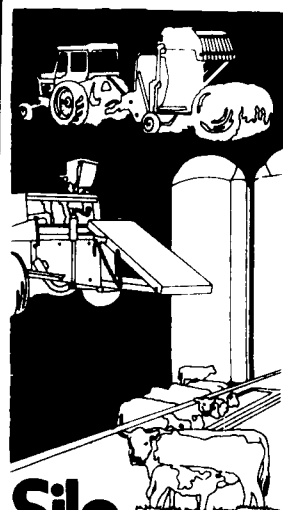
Children usually develop interest in hobbies during middle-childhood: ages 6-11. These interests may blossom into careers. Also, children with hobbies are less likely to be chronically bored and uninvolved.

Hobbies developed as youngsters may stick with us as adults. They can be a stimulating alternative outlet for adults who might otherwise become narrowly focused in their work.

Of course, it is important that children be encouraged in their own interests, not those of the parents. Children will either rebel or become apathetic about hobbies that are forced on them.

Every parent has heard a frustrated young child say, "I want to do it myself!" The child is really saying, "I want to feel capable and important." If we repeatedly tell the child "You cannot" or "You did it wrong" eventually the child will not do anything.

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