

# TAKING TIME

by Rebecca Escott

Extension Home Economist



her."...assuming the wife's employer wouldn't place the same demands or expectations on her.

In your family, is it the mother who assumes primary responsibility for transporting children to appointments? Does she cancel meetings or adjust schedules to accommodate a child's needs? Is there a logical reason why those choices are made? Is her time really more flexible?

People say parenting needs to be a 50-50 shared responsibility. After caring for an 18-month-old for one evening, I was once again reminded that parenting is not a 50-50 job, but a 100-100 job! When it comes to child care choices and holding up your end of that major responsibility, how are you doing? In your home, do adults share the joys and the burdens that children bring?

Ask yourself these questions:  
Who checks to make sure homework is completed and school paperwork is returned?

Who plans birthday parties for your child?

Who prepares your child's lunch?

Who takes care of the bedtime routine?

Who repairs or assembles a child's toys?

Who makes the decisions about child discipline?

Take some time this week to think through the assumptions you've made about child care and the roles you accept. Are they the best ones for you? Are they equitable? Do both partners accept those roles? If it's time for a

change, use this column as a motivator to discuss one or two areas and come up with a compromise

that builds support for you as a parent and that provides safe supervision for your children.

## Ida's Notebook

Ida Risser

When I go to the garden to plant seeds, I have to take a pencil and paper along. You see, one afternoon I put 19 different kinds of seeds in three rows. Usually I can identify plants when they sprout but some of these were unusual flowers. Because I save my own seed and sometimes plant old seed, this year I had to replant some green beans.

This spring I raised my own pink, yellow, and red tomato plants. But when I put them in the garden, something ate them. This is very discouraging as I then had to buy some. Celery is something that I do not raise due to all the work of bleaching it in the fall but this year I've put some in my garden as it is quite expensive in the store.

One of Lancaster Farming's

readers was kind enough to bring me a big box of various plants and I'm enjoying them as they bloom. In the fall I had given her a variety of lily bulbs.

This year our children decided to give my husband a surprise party on his 75th birthday. He expected to have lunch at a nice restaurant with two of our children. But, when we arrived there were fourteen family members, beautiful flowers, balloons and a big decorated cake.

He even got a gift certificate to buy more expensive woodworking equipment. His most recent project was a very nice bookcase. But when it was finished and he showed it to me, I thought it needed glass doors so the books wouldn't get dusty. It seems that I am never satisfied.

**Child Care Choices**  
Nationally, 26 million children up to age 13 are cared for in a variety of ways while their parents work. Forty-eight percent are cared for by relatives. Another 44% are in either center or family day care. But having a designated day care provider doesn't mean that parents don't have to discuss choices for unexpected events.

Who takes a child to see a pediatrician if she has a rash? When your child is sick, who does the school nurse call? When can your daughter be home alone for a few hours in the afternoon? And who's responsible for checking up on her while she is alone? Who makes the babysitting arrangements if you want to go out to dinner?

Child care choices are difficult ones, even for families in rural areas. For many farming families, one partner may work off the property for at least part of the week. Even if an adult is "home," that doesn't mean that he or she has the flexibility or the freedom to be providing careful supervision of a young child. You are still involved in community organizations. You need to run errands and

see doctors. These events may throw a glitch in your routine child care choices.

You can take a few positive steps to prepare for these choices. Several months ago, I shared a list of home-alone readiness skills. They may come in handy as you consider summer child care needs. Remember the highlights. Most importantly, both you and your child should feel relatively comfortable with the idea that she will be home alone for some time. She should also be able to recite her name, address, and phone number. Your child needs to be able to take accurate phone messages and in an emergency to dial 911 and get to a neighbor for assistance.

Other child care choices may create some tension between you and your partner. My friends face these choices on a frequent basis. During the winter months, child care centers in our area closed early because of bad road conditions, and I heard lots of stories about "Who's going to leave work early and pick up the baby?" In one case I heard a husband comment to his wife, "I can't just leave work. We have things that have got to get out today. You'll have to get

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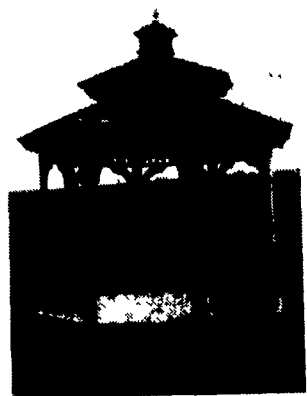
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