

Mom's Work Worth Thousands

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In May 2005 a report from salary.com excited many of us interested in the world of moms. The grand conclusion was that moms (typically with 2 children) would earn \$131,471 US or \$163,855 Canadian a year if they were paid for the services rendered to their family. Very few families could arrange this kind of personal payment. However many women were thrilled to be acknowledged for their efforts and an explanation for their exhaustion.

Speaking of *exhaustion* in 2003 the Canadian Stress Institute found that women experienced a larger percentage of stress than their male partners--52% compared to 45%. That percentage increased to 58% for women who put in similar employment hours as their spouse. Add to this data that mothers typically accept 70% responsibility for family and home duties. How do they do this? They back off on sleep. Now, don't misunderstand. There are exceptions, those wonderful spouses who pick up brooms, dish clothes and diapers as easily as a hammer or tire wrench. And some dads are responsible for the bulk of family responsibilities.

But what about those moms who risk their own well being by labouring that 70% or more? Some of them insist on tasks done *their way*. They may even be heard to say, "I have standards, you know?" This is a very effective strategy for scaring away willing contributors. Fortunately, they can change their belief to a sane position of, "an improvement is helpful." Families in which support, cooperation and fairness are exercised have less conflict or illness. They put into action valuing family relationships and teamwork. Let's not ruin our main relationship over dust.

Another block to assistance is martyrdom. "I can do it. I'm the Mom." When moms are over-responsible they rob other family members of demonstrating their capabilities. Parents do their children no favour by doing for them what they can do for themselves. Sometimes, as women, our need to be needed overshadows the reality of the need for our bodies and minds to have rest, relaxation, recreation and down time.

A third block to gaining family cooperation is utilizing nagging and whining instead of invitation and negotiation. For help with a nagging habit please see my article *Gag Your Nagging* under *Parenting Possibilities* on the *Free Articles* page at www.lightheartedconcepts.com.

If you are ready to invite and negotiate the household workload, please do the following exercise. Then hold a family meeting (guideline available under *Parenting Possibilities* on

the *Free Articles* page at www.lightheartedconcepts.com) where you come to agreement to make all family members' contributions priceless.

Family Contribution Work Inventory

Write beside each item the initial of who does what family tasks and roughly how long each task takes to do weekly:

Paid Employment:

Volunteer/Community Involvement:

Home/Family Tasks:

Cleaning:

Put away my property/other's property

Dispose of old newspapers, magazines & junk mail

Clean my project mess/other's project mess

Straighten house

Dust

Vacuum

Sweep & mop floor

Clean Venetian blinds & drapes to the cleaners

Wash windows

Clean attic or basement

Bed:

Make the bed

Make children's/guest's bed

Change sheets

Bath:

Hang up my towel/other's towel

Wipe down the shower/tub

Clean facial hair from sink

Clean the bathroom

Food:

Clean up after own snacks/after other's snacks

Meal plan

Shop for groceries

Put groceries away

Cook meals

Set the table

Clear the table

Wash the dishes

Put dishes away

Prepare for parties & gatherings

Clean out refrigerator or defrost freezer

Children:

Play with & take on outings

Discipline & referee disputes

Help with school projects

Take care of them when ill

Take to the doctor

Take to the dentist

Take shopping for clothes & other needs

Nurse, change diapers and potty train

Feed children

Give a bath

Dress & find shoes

Put to bed

Chauffeur to activities

Arrange for a babysitter

Laundry:

Hang up my clothes if still clean enough to wear/other's clothes

Put my clothes into hamper/other's clothes into hamper

Do the wash and drying

Fold laundry

Iron my clothes/iron other's clothes
Take clothes to and from the dry cleaners
Put clean clothes away
Mend

Garbage:

Take it out
Recycle

Maintenance & Repairs:

Paint & papering
Fix & mend broken things around house
Purchase parts needed for household repairs
Arrange for repairs done by outside help
Replace light bulbs & fuses

Outside:

Mow the lawn
Water lawn
Rake the lawn
Trim trees & shrubs
Care for garden &/or flowerbeds
Delitter grounds
Shovel/sweep walks & sidewalks
Clean out garage

Vehicle Maintenance

Clean the inside of car
Wash outside of car
Refuel car
Arrange for repairs
Take care to repair shop
Check & maintain oil & water

Miscellaneous:

Run my own errands/other's errands
Pack my own suitcase/other's suitcase
Feed & clean my or our pet(s)/other's pet(s)
Hire professional cleaning when needed
Make my dental/medical appointments/other's appointments
Plan & purchase my clothes/ other's clothes
Pay my bills/family bills
Arrange my social life/other's social life
Organize my things in closet/other's things/closet
Care of aging/ill relatives
Maintain relationships with supportive family and friends

Other(s):

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