



Dealing With Child Care and Guilt

Some families have no choice financially but to return to work immediately after the birth of a child. Others may let personal satisfaction guide their decision. Either ways, many parents—particularly mothers—make the difficult decision to place their children in child care outside the home.

Try these strategies for avoiding the guilt often associated with this process:

- **Know the facts.** Children in child care develop much the same as children raised at home, according to some experts. Further, quality day care for preschoolers can have a positive effect on self-control, language skills and other basic skills.
- **Discuss the decision to pursue employment and child care.** When both partners agree, your children will pick up on a family sense of pride and a feeling that “we are all in this together.”
- **Choose employment wisely.** When a mother’s job is intellectually, emotionally or financially rewarding, her children benefit.
- **Look into alternative work arrangements.** Options include job sharing, part-time work, telecommuting and consulting.
- **Build a support network of friends and relatives.** Seek out people who can provide backup care when work demands interfere with child care schedules.
- **Find some balance in your choice.** Attempting to be a super-achiever can increase feelings of guilt, so prioritize activities and recognize that you have limits.

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