



OREGON'S CHILD CARE SEARCH ENGINE

Connect.Educate.Navigate

Family Matters

Family Connections

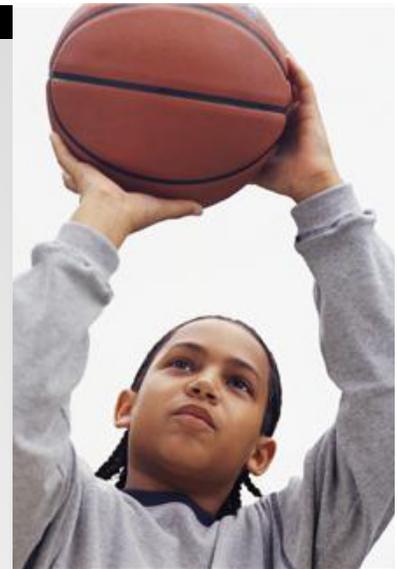
Child Care Resource and Referral of Linn and Benton

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The co-parenting challenge: Put your kids first

When parents don't live together, whatever the reason, raising kids is even more complicated than usual. "Co-parenting" adds an extra layer of challenge to the responsibility of caring for children, from getting them to and from school and soccer games to maintaining a consistent schedule and enforcing important family rules. Here's some advice for making the co-parenting relationship work to everyone's benefit:

- ❖ **Put your children first.** You and the other parent should agree to put your kids' needs ahead of any issues you may have with each other. Don't use a child as a pawn in your own relationship with an ex-spouse.
- ❖ **Plan together.** Try to avoid any unilateral decisions about your children. Sit down regularly to map out schedules and discuss upcoming issues. Negotiate in good faith who's responsible for what, shared rules, and boundaries.
- ❖ **Respect each other's rules.** You and your co-parent may have different ideas about behavior, schedules, expectations, etc. As long as your children are safe and given reasonable limits, don't rock the boat. Co-parenting relationships can be complicated for children, too, so avoid putting them in the middle of your disputes.
- ❖ **Maintain some distance.** Don't call your child repeatedly while he or she is at your co-parent's house. Resist the urge to pump children for information that's none of your business (an ex-spouse's new partner, for example), or comment negatively on the co-parent's personality.
- ❖ **Communicate directly.** Don't use your children as a conduit for messages to the other parent. If issues or questions come up, contact him or her directly. You'll suffer fewer misunderstandings, and you'll keep your children out of your personal issues.



Spring Break

Need child care for school age children during their spring break?

It's not too soon to start planning.

Family Connections can help.

541-917-4896
800-845-1363

connect@linnbenton.edu

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Supporting Healthy Families

- ❖ Personalized Child Care Referrals/Information
- ❖ Parenting Support & Information/Advice Line
- ❖ Elder Care Referrals

❖ *Support your co-parent.* Let your children know that they're expected to follow the other parents' rules when they're with him or her. Speak respectfully about the co-parent, and insist that your children do the same.

Take positive action against workplace stress

Your job may be full of pressure, but that doesn't mean you have to be at the mercy of work-related stress. You'll stay healthier, happier, and more productive with these tips for keeping stress under control wherever you work:

- ❖ *Get enough sleep.* Lack of sleep diminishes your ability to deal with stress. Don't burn the midnight oil trying to stay caught up. Seven or eight hours of sleep every night will help you stay calm and patient throughout the day.
- ❖ *Plan to worry.* Set aside 30 minutes regularly to think about what's bothering you. If you know you'll be able to tackle your problems, they won't nag at you so much throughout the day. • Resist the urge to vent. Expressing your feelings isn't the same as losing control. Lashing out at others can intensify your sense of frustration, especially if you can't do anything about the situation. You'll also alienate the people around you. Focus on solving problems without exploding.
- ❖ *Find your stress triggers.* Pay attention to the causes of stress in your workplace. By observing what's likely to make you nervous, impatient, or angry, you'll be able to head off an ugly incident with your co-workers.
- ❖ *Exercise.* Regular exercise keeps you healthier overall. Some scientific evidence suggests that exercise reduce levels of a hormone called cortisol, which is released by the adrenal glands when you're feeling stressed, and which can damage your body if levels stay too high for too long. Low-impact exercises such as yoga can help you relax your mind as well as your body.
- ❖ *Recognize the symptoms.* Some people try to ignore the presence of stress in their lives, but if you're suffering from warning signs like lingering headaches, sleep disturbances, difficulty concentrating, or stomach problems, you may be hiding from a very real threat to your health. Pay attention to what your body is telling you before stress takes its toll.

How to hire a home care aide

More and more families find they need the assistance of a worker to help their senior, infirm family member or a person with intellectual or developmental disabilities. At these times, you may want to ask your doctor or a social-worker for a referral. They may also be able to provide a list of home-care agencies that serve your area. A home care aide might be a good choice if your relative needs help with housekeeping, laundry, shopping, and meals.

Talk this over with your relative to be sure they will accept home care. Many older or ill people resist because they don't want strangers in their home or they view them as a sign that their independence is slipping away. Consider asking them to try a two week trial to see if they like home care.

Here are some interview questions to ask:

- ❖ Do you like caring for people?
- ❖ Do you have training? What kind? From whom?
- ❖ Can you provide references?
- ❖ Are you insured and bonded?
- ❖ Have you passed a background check?

Paying for care is sometimes covered through long-term insurance, the Veterans Administration, Medicare, or Medicaid. Medicare provides a Home Health Compare Web tool (medicare.gov/hhcompare), which allows you to compare the services of agencies in your area and assess their quality.

The local Area Agency on Aging may have information about home-care agencies and sources of funding. Many times you will expect to pay out-of-pocket. Call Family Connections for additional resources in your local area. Home-care aides can improve the quality of life of the people they help. They can keep your family member living independently for as long as possible.

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