

Five Steps to Stay Organized with Hectic Schedules:

Natalie Conrad, A Mother of Five Shares Her Secrets

Natalie Conrad is a productivity trainer and organizing consultant. She has been providing organizing workshops and services to businesses and families for four years. Having been a single mother of three, and now a blended family of five, Conrad understands what it means to be too busy to go to the bathroom. Over the years she has developed a system to give moms who are overscheduled and too many tasks some sanity and peace of mind. She is in the process of writing a book especially for mom's who are overwhelmed with schedules and "to-dos". Conrad gave **Banana Moments** the inside scoop.

Conrad's advice to moms who are juggling many activities and tasks every day: keep it simple. "Most of the time we are caught up in the flurry of activities, says Conrad, "and we cannot see a path. We are simply reacting." Her goal is to offer hope to moms who

feel overwhelmed with responsibility for schedules, homework, play dates, meals, laundry - endless tasks. Some of her key advice includes:



1. Be consistent. For example, at nighttime have a schedule. Establish a clear bedtime so that the kids will automatically adhere to it.
2. Involve the children in tasks –incrementally. When making the bed, let the kids do it a piece at a time (such as pulling up the comforter). Then when they have mastered pulling up the comforter, have the kids work with the sheets, and so on. It is important to allow the children to build the skills necessary to take on various chores around the house.
3. Routines. Establish routines for when tasks are done and adhere to them. Give praise for the things you see done correctly to reinforce continued participation.

4. Be prepared. For "park day", as an example, load up the car the night before – after the kids are in bed. And when you come home, replace what you used in the diaper bag so it is always ready to go.
5. Take time for MOM. Taking time for yourself is important. Sometimes "Mom needs a time out, not the kid" If you find yourself getting frustrated with the noise level, or it's very chaotic, simply tell the kids, "Mommy needs a time out". Over time the children will be able to appreciate how their actions are impacting Mom – especially when she has to leave the room.

Eventually the kids would be able to ask "Mommy are you noise sensitive?", and they would quiet down for a while so she did not have to leave the room. According to Conrad, "It's ok to let your kids know when you are having an off day" because they will eventually develop compassion for your point of view and learn how to handle their 'off' days as they get older."

According to Conrad, "Mom" is the family manager, CEO, CFO, and Project Manager so the overall idea is to set up a system (with supplies, routines, schedules, and training to engage the children) and do it repetitively. Just like Kindergarten class. A Kindergarten class system will allow the kids to ease into doing various chores by building their skills and they will start to feel like they have a sense of purpose and are a part of the team. Conrad also says that it is important to remember "if you put it all on yourself, people are going to always expect you to do it."



The main objective is to avoid becoming the "mommy maid" and inspire your family to work as a team.

For more information, visit
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For more information about Natalie Conrad and her work, contact: <http://organizedmoms.ning.com> where you can join other moms in sharing tips and problem solving techniques.