

Caregiver Connection

Quarterly Newsletter

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Family Conflict: Your Kids Can Help With Caregiving in Little Ways

Depending on their age, your children may or may not understand why you need to spend so much time caring for your older loved one. All they may know is that this results in having less time with you and less of your attention or patience. This can lead to resentment on their part and guilt on yours, especially if you can't make it to some of their school or sports events.

"Realize you're not going to be perfect and children don't need you to be," advises Barry J. Jacobs, a clinical psychologist, health care consultant and AARP.org columnist. "They need you to be loving and supportive."

Here are some strategies that can help minimize the effect of caregiving on your kids:

1. Preserve the touchstones of family life

"Make sure you have dedicated time with your children, including bedtime rituals and mealtime rituals," Jacobs says.

This will enhance the closeness and connection between you and them and provide a stabilizing influence that will counteract the times when your attention is suddenly diverted because of your older family member's needs.

2. Involve your kids in appropriate ways

If you bring your children into the caregiving equation, they'll feel included and valued — as long as you don't overdo it.

"Look for who in the family can give support and relief with physical and emotional labor," says Nancy Schlossberg, professor emerita of counseling psychology at the University of Maryland and author of *Too Young to Be Old*. Rather than saddling young kids with hard-core caregiving tasks, allow them to entertain an older family member with funny stories or by playing cards or watching a movie with him or her.

With teenagers, you could let them choose how to help out, perhaps by picking up medicine at the drugstore or bringing the loved one a meal. When kids do chip in, give them praise for their actions.

3. Give kids a chance to voice their feelings

Acknowledge that they're not getting as much of your time and attention as they used to or that you'd like to give them, and "allow them to express their anger or resentment," Schlossberg says. Keep them in the loop about what's going on with the caregiving situation, without overwhelming them with details. And let kids share their unvarnished feelings.

Allowing them to vent will dissipate some of their frustrations, and you may discover a relatively easy solution to something that's been bothering them — if you can discover what the problem is.

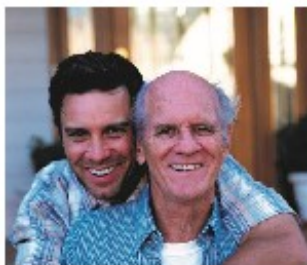
4. Dedicate time to each child

Every week try to spend one-on-one time with each of your kids "so you can reassure them that they remain foremost in your mind while you're helping Grandma or Grandpa," suggests Eve Markowitz Preston, a psychologist in private practice in New York City who serves mostly older adults and often makes home visits.

By devoting weekly time to do an art project, go shopping, play, talk or simply hang out with each child, all of them will get the message that they are still a priority for you, that you love them and that some semblance of normal family life remains.

Stacey Colino is an independent, award-winning writer specializing in health, psychology and family issues. Her work has appeared in dozens of national magazines as well as websites and books.

<https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/life-balance/info-2019/conflicts-with-kids.html>



REGISTER TODAY! VIRTUAL DEMENTIA CAREGIVER SYMPOSIUM

Wednesday, November 16 2022
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Hosted through Zoom

Register today to join the [Alzheimer's Association](#) for a special half-day Virtual Dementia Caregiver Symposium.

This program affords caregivers the opportunity to connect with peers and professionals while enhancing their caregiving skills. Attend to learn practical tips as well as how to connect to vital community based resources.

REGISTRATION LINK IS LIVE!
<https://action.alz.org/mtg/86863020>

Mark your calendar, register to join and invite others!
To learn more, call the Alzheimer's Association
24/7 Helpline: [800.272.3900](tel:800.272.3900).



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