

How to Succeed in College with Young Children

The choice to continue higher education is never easy, especially when you are a parent of several little ones. It is a responsibility that will require a lot of your time, money, commitment, and effort figuring out how to juggle...

Part 1 of 3:

Caring for Your Kids

1. **Set a daily routine.** Having a set routine helps create some form of normalcy, a sense of security, and it establishes everyday expectations. Planning set times for dinner, story time, bath time, bed time, etc. Not only does this help your child adjust to your new lifestyle but it helps you succeed in college.
 1. Consider writing out a family schedule for all to see. If your young kids can't read yet, use pictures and the general order of events to help them know what to expect next.
2. **Keep your own schedule of chores and to-dos.** Beyond the schedule that you keep for the whole family, you'll want a weekly plan in your head for your studies, parenting duties, and household tasks. If you know you're able to clean the kitchen on a given day, for example, it'll become part of your weekly routine more easily if you set aside a specific time for it.
 1. Try meal prepping on a Sunday. This free up your time during the week for other activities.
 2. Do some spot-cleaning and smaller tasks throughout the week as you're able to. Living with a little mess is understandable given everything that's on your plate. If you can't deep-clean your kitchen, just set aside 5 minutes to wipe your surfaces and empty the dishwasher. Get your kids to help at an age-appropriate level.
3. **Find proper childcare.** This is very important when planning to continue your education. This is one of the main reasons many parents never return to school or finish. Childcare can be quite costly, so you should explore all your options.
 1. Talk your trusted family and friends to see if they can help you in any way possible.
 2. Join a parent group and make new friends. This way you build new relationships for both you and your kids. This opens the opportunity for playdates and babysitting tradeoffs.
 3. Find a child care program that fits your budget and schedule.
4. **Involve your kids.** Involving your little ones in your college life can be such a double blessing. It can give your little one a boost of confidence, create a feature goal of one day attending college, a way for you study, or just a fun day to them.
 1. Involving them in your decision of going back to school can make them feel important and give them a sense of how things will go.
 2. Taking your little ones with you to school can be fun to them. Whether it's a planned visit to talk to your professors or just taking them on a tour of the school, they'll feel like you want to include them in your life there.
 3. Let them help with your homework. This may be easier said than done, but if there are certain tasks they can help with, it can boost their confidence level and allow you to complete your homework while caring for them.

5. **Enjoy being with your kids.** Spend as much time as possible with them. Your goal is to succeed in school, while not missing out on those fun moments with your kids. Try to make sure you attend all school activities that are important to them. Have a movie or game night and play dates at least once a week. This is important, so that they don't feel like they are competing with your school work for attention.

Part 2 of 3:

Taking Care of Yourself

1. **Have confidence in your ability to reach your goal.** Believe in yourself. Try to keep a positive outlook on each task you are faced with. Being negative can make you feel emotionally drained, affect your relationship with your kids, and your grades. If you set daily, attainable goals, this could help you feel accomplished.
2. **Take a break.** If there is a day where it all is too much to bare, take a parent timeout from everything! There will be times when you will feel defeated. Just stop what you're doing and treat yourself to something well deserved. Remember that you can't always be the perfect parent or student!
 1. Find your happy place and stay there, until you have a clear mind again.
 2. Have a glass of your favorite wind-down drink, whether it's a glass of warm milk, tea, wine, or something stronger.
 3. Have a spa date with a good friend. Make sure to keep a healthy social life.

Part 3 of 3:

Tackling School Life

1. **Build a schedule.** When enrolling in classes for the semester, consider your everyday life. You should pick classes that won't add additional stress to your life. Remember that you're a parent, so don't over load your life by enrolling in more classes than you can handle at one time.
 1. Use resources that give you an insight about the professor whose course(s) you are considering taking.
 2. Interview or talk with the professor, to see if they will be a good fit for you.
 3. Take advantage of school advisor, to help you build the perfect schedule.
 4. Give online classes a thought when choosing classes.
2. **Make use of on-campus resources.** Most colleges have places you could go to get additional help outside of the classroom. Take advantage of any resource labs that your school might offer, before turning in coursework. As well, take use of any free tutoring session(s) that are available to you.
3. **Find time to study.** Typically a professor will recommend you set aside six to nine hours of study time per week, outside of class. Science courses can involve even more time. One of the best places to study is the school library.
 1. It is best to keep your notes with you when in the car. This way you can study anywhere, at any time. Turn studying into a game with your kids. They can become the student and you the teacher. This will help you to learn your material as well as sharing some creative family time.
4. **Make sure you keep up with all your coursework.** It is very easy to fall behind if you do not keep up with your courses. As well, assignments that are not turned in will affect your grade.
 1. Remember, you have sacrificed *your* time, *family* time, and *finances* to improve yourself. You do not want to see your commitment and sacrifices go to waste.
 2. Check your email for updated announcements from your professor at least twice a day.
 3. Check your class syllabus daily.

4. Complete work ahead of schedule, if you can find the time.
5. Don't be afraid to ask your teacher for help if you don't understand an assignment or concept.

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