

# Work and Family



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## DATES TO REMEMBER

August is actually one of the only months that do not include a national holiday or widely recognized day for celebration of some kind. However, you can use any day of any month to remember someone special in your life, someone that deserves a little thanks or praise for a job well done. Maybe some words of encouragement for someone that is having a tough time lately. Perhaps you could find time to visit someone that may be lonely, just to say "hello" and sit for a while to chat. It doesn't cost anything but a few minutes of your time, and it could easily put a smile on someone's face. Another thing, August tends to be one of the hottest months in most of the country, so be sure to check on the elderly (especially if they are without air conditioning). When the temperature is high, offer to run an errand while you are out doing your own. Remember... if it's hot for us, it may be unbearable for an elderly person. And don't forget the kids! This is a wonderful opportunity to teach them compassion and kindness.



## UPGRADE YOURSELF

Expanding your skills or keeping them up-to-date can be as convenient as sitting down in front of your computer. You can take classes or even earn a degree on-line.

Some traditional schools offer Internet-based training, and some campuses are completely virtual. The following questions may help you evaluate a course you're considering:

- **What is the school's reputation?**
- **How long has it been offering classes on-line?** As with any learning institute, you'll want to find out how well respected the program is before you invest your time and money in it. You can check with the Department of Education in the state where the school is located, the Better Business Bureau near the school, or the U.S. Department of Education's Accreditation and State Liaison Division at (202) 708-7417. Alumni of the school and experts in the field of study you wish to pursue also may offer valuable feedback.
- **Who is teaching the course and how?** What are the instructor's qualifications? Will you be able to interact with him or her as needed? Is the course completely self-directed, or is it supplemented with "live" interaction, perhaps in an on-line chat room? How are tests and assignments evaluated?
- **What are the technical requirements?** Be sure you have the necessary software and hardware to take the course. Also, can you get technical assistance and support during the term of the course?



**PLAY is the "Work" of Childhood**

Play is essential to every child's healthy development. Through play, children create, fantasize, learn life skills, discover and solve problems. The experiences children have during play help them achieve a sense of control over their lives, bolstering feelings of self-confidence and worth. Lots of learning occurs naturally and spontaneously during play. You can promote the power and pleasure of play for your child in the following ways:

1. Allow your child to explore personal fantasies through imagination and experience the delightful world of play without imposing too much structure.
2. Arrange a safe, special play area that will help your child's concentration and creativity flourish.
3. Make sure your child's toys are safe, durable and of high quality, and check them frequently for wear and tear.
4. Select toys that are simple in design and construction and appropriate for your child's age, skill level and personal interests.
5. Get down on the floor and play with your child. Follow her lead in terms of what to play and how. You'll be amazed at how much fun this is – and how much you can learn about your child while doing it.

## **NO MORE SENIOR MOMENTS!**

If you often find yourself saying, "I know this!" or "It's on the tip of my tongue," it's time to strength-train your brain. Here, ways to pump up your memory and prevent embarrassing flubs, from *20/20 Thinking: 1,000 Powerful Strategies to Sharpen Your Mind, Brighten Your Mood, and Boost Your Memory*, by Maggie Greenwood-Robinson, Ph.D.:

Shake things up - when your brain is stimulated, new connections are thought to form between brain cells. Turn a book or magazine upside down and read it for three minutes.

Dance - exercise carries oxygen and blood to your brain. Complex dances strengthen connections between brain cells. Get moving with ballet or tango, or maybe try line dancing.

Take a class – people who return to school have more active brain cells, which help protect the aging brain.

## **Lose Weight With Fiber**

Eat less, feel fuller? That's one benefit of a high-fiber diet. Weight loss is another. Researchers at Tufts University reviewed data on fiber and found that people who ate an extra 14 grams of fiber daily cut their calorie intake by about 10%; those who added 12 grams lost about a pound per month. "Fiber can help with weight loss because it increases the feeling of fullness and influences the hormones that regulate food intake," says study co-author Edward Saltzman. The American Heart Association recommends that we get 25 to 30 grams of fiber daily; many of us get just half that.

## **RAISE THE ALARM**

Give your family a gift that could save their lives: new or extra smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and a load of fresh batteries. In the year 2001, there were nearly 400,000 house fires in the U.S., according to the National Fire Protection Association. Also, carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless gas produced by fuel-burning appliances like furnaces and fireplaces, kills hundreds each year because of inadequate venting to the outside, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). To avoid being a statistic, follow these tips:

**Smoke Alarms:** Have one installed on every level of your home and outside of sleeping areas. Change batteries annually and vacuum the alarm twice a year. Replace existing alarms every ten years.

**Carbon Monoxide Alarms:** Install at least one alarm per home, right outside the main sleeping area. If the alarm sounds, get out and call 911 from a neighbor's house.