

# Work and Family



May 2003

COMMUNIQUE

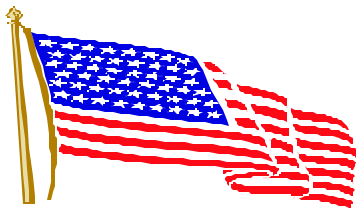
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## Dates to Remember

**May 11 – Mother's Day**

**May 17 – Armed Forces Day**

**May 26 – Memorial Day Observed**



## Helping Kids Through Turbulent Times

Almost every generation of American children has faced its own challenges. The poverty of the Depression shaped children of the 1930s just as national prosperity shaped children in the 1950s. World Wars I and II, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War were all significant influences in the lives of children. While children may be too young to participate in the events of the world, they are never too young to feel their effects. Today's children are living in a period of turbulence when terrorists, snipers, abductors, suicide bombers, and war threaten the safety and security of



individuals all over the world. While it's too early to tell if this will be the challenge that shapes the current generation of children, parents and community leaders can

take action now to help young people cope with the threat of violence present in all of our lives. Parents can help minimize their children's fear and anxiety and help them feel safer by emphasizing their own abilities to cope with situations. They can tell children it is normal to feel frightened, but that

they will do everything they can to keep them safe. Reassure them without dismissing their fears. Limit children's exposure to the news when current events are particularly frightening. Televisions have a way of bringing events and all of the emotions they provoke right into your home – even when they occur thousands of miles away. Children “read” their parents' responses to current events, so parents should take care not to seem overwhelmed or terribly frightened. In many ways, mom and dad are the “whole world” to a child. When the parent-child relationship is a safe haven, children can tolerate almost any external challenge.

## Money Matters

### **How to Pull the Plug on Repair Rip-offs**

Most people who fix home appliances are on the level. But there are still plenty who inflate prices or falsely claim you need parts. Try these tips to protect yourself:



- Know what's wrong – When your garage door won't open or the stove stops working, call the manufacturer first and ask what typically causes the problem, advises David Borsykowsky, an assistant attorney general with Vermont's consumer and antitrust division. Then ask what parts are likely to be needed and what they generally cost.
- Go next door – Find out what neighbors paid to fix a similar problem and which repair company they used, says William Audet, a consumer-fraud attorney in San Jose, California. Then call the Better Business Bureau to inquire about any complaints against the company.

- Stick around – Remain present during a repair and ask questions about what's being done. Take notes in case you need to follow up later.
- Look again – If the repairperson recommends a solution that seems excessive, consider a second opinion, says Borsykowsky. "The first person may be honest, but untrained or unaware that his \$3000 estimate only needed a \$45 part."

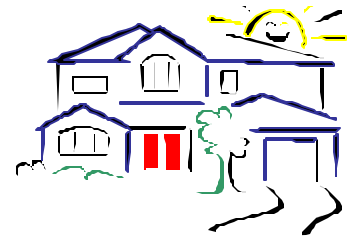
### Coffee's Little Perk

It can stain, so coffee gets a bad rap when it comes to teeth. But a recent study shows there's reason to smile: Your morning pick-me-up may help prevent cavities. Coffee is loaded with compounds such as trigonelline that contribute to its flavor and aroma. As you drink, these molecules are believed to attach themselves to your teeth, protecting your pearly enamel from the bacteria that can cause tooth decay.

### Elder Care Issues

Nursing homes are often perceived by the elderly as a warehouse where they're sent so they won't be in anybody's way. This is one issue that can be only partially addressed through your research of potential nursing homes. As long as you select a facility located near you that has liberal visiting hours, your only real means to relieve this concern is to establish a strong relationship of trust with your elder. Make realistic arrangements for regular visits – and *keep to them*. But do keep in mind that a part of the fear of loneliness is not strictly related to a fear that *you* won't visit. Moving to a nursing home often means leaving behind a whole community of friends and acquaintances. If the places you are looking at do not provide ample activities and opportunities for socialization, your elder will justifiably feel exiled, and will be much more dependent on your visits for stimulation and attention. It is imperative, then, that you carefully consider the programs and activities that the nursing home provides for its residents, and that you find some that coincide with your parent's own interests.

### To Each A Fair Share



Develop a system to divide weekend chores. Have one person divide the chores into two groups and the other gets to pick which group to do. For example, the divider might break down the housecleaning into the upstairs and downstairs or offer the alternative of doing laundry or grocery shopping. The one who does the dividing is motivated to make the groups equal because they know they will get stuck with one of them. Another fair trade-off is that whichever spouse cooks, the other cleans up. Some chores may require teamwork or are simply more fun to do together. By all means, use this time wisely and include the kids whenever possible.

### Parenting 101

Parents have learned the hard way that it's not enough to "just say no" to alcohol, drugs, sex, or other risky behavior. Long before our children become teenagers, we have to start giving them practical education about the dangers they will face and teaching them our moral values. In that way, we arm them with the ability to make good decisions for their own protection. We must *always* remember that our good – or bad – examples are our children's most effective teachers.

