



### **HELP WANTED**

**Male/female to work double to triple shifts. No weekends or holidays off. Long-term commitment (18 yrs. min.). Must have unlimited physical, emotional stamina. Low pay to start, but high potential for satisfaction.**

Welcome to the world of parenthood!

Why didn't someone tell you there were going to be days when you would feel: old before your time, tired before 11 a.m., and too upset to think straight?

Would you have believed them, if they had?

One of the nicest things about being a parent is that you don't have to know everything. The job, like the child, grows gradually. There's on-the-job training.

So take a few moments, just for yourself, and learn how to make the rewards of parenting equal the demands.

### **Birth to One Year**

Learn the basics. How do you bathe a baby? Or change a diaper? You can learn! Read, ask an expert, talk to your parents and other parents.

Love your baby. Give all you've got! Talk to your baby. Touch, hold, kiss, hug, smile and enjoy! It's impossible to spoil a baby.

Discover what's what. Pay close attention to all the sounds - cooing, babbling, gurgling, and crying - your baby makes, as well as facial expressions and body movements. Each one means something different.

Never use physical force. The pressures of parenting are very real. You need to find safe, satisfying ways to release them - but never on your baby.

### **Toddlerhood**

Take a deep breath. The assault on your house, your personal belongings . . . this too, shall pass. Right now, to your toddler, everything is new, exciting . . . and just waiting to be explored.

Childproof your house. Pack away your treasures and lock up dangerous or poisonous items. You'll be more relaxed, and you won't have to say "NO" so often.

Keep the rules simple and few. Your goal is to keep your toddler safe. Table manners can wait and so can toilet training.

### **School Age**

Show interest. Check homework, talk about what's happening in school, ask their friends over, and find time to see your children's teachers occasionally.

Communicate. If there's a single golden rule for parents, it's this: Talk to your children (and listen, too).

Assign kid-sized chores. Kids this age love to help. Just make sure the chores fit each child's capabilities. Nothing makes a child lose interest faster than having to do something too difficult, or too easy.

## **Adolescence**

Refuse to get confused. Part of growing up is acting like a two-year-old and an adult, all in the same day. Expect your teen to do this, and be prepared to comfort, reassure and, on occasion, look the other way.

Face the facts. Your teen will probably say "I know that," when you talk about the facts of life, but do it anyway. As a parent, you're the only one who can share the values that go with the facts!

Let your affection show. Cool the physical demonstrations (especially when their friends are around), but make it loud and clear: You care!

Cut those apron strings. Old values, taught from the cradle, may fade away during the teen years, but they come back - along with grownup children you'll be proud to know. Trust your teens to make it all the way.

## **Discipline**

Nothing helps your survival as a parent more than discipline. But, to be effective, discipline must teach a child how to avoid repeating misbehaviors and what to do instead. It should also be given in doses that fit the age of the child and the size of the crime.

Babies are never candidates for discipline. They're too little! All children react better to approval and affection.

Discipline only when reasonable expectations are not met. Define clearly, in advance, what you want them to do!

Be consistent. Whatever style of discipline you choose, use in every situation, even in public or when the grandparents are visiting.

Review expectations regularly. There are no perfect children, just as there are no perfect parents. If your children are not meeting your expectations, the expectations probably need changing, not the children.

Shame, rejection, withdrawal of affection, or preferential treatment of one child over another have no place in discipline.

Adapted from "Parent's Survival Tips," published by the Minnesota Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse