Work Studies
Module 5: Managing Work and Life Commitments

Family and work

Research resources

Video
A Day in the Life of a Stay-at-Home Dad – significance of gender
Juggling Roles – work and children

Texts

Web
Australian Institute of Family Studies: www.aifs.org.au
Australian Bureau of Statistics: www.abs.gov.au
NSW Department of Industrial Relations: www.dir.nsw.gov.au

Research tasks
Complete task 1 and ONE of tasks 2–6.

1. Who does what and when in your family?
Investigate the division of work within your family and draw conclusions about the equity of task distribution between various members of the family. Conduct an observation at home over the period of a week. Consider the range of roles/tasks you wish to observe. At the end of the week, study your diary entries. Show statistics on the following:
- the amount of time in hours spent on paid work by all family members
- the amount of time in hours spend on unpaid work by all family members
- the proportion of time spent on paid and unpaid work by all family members.
Draw a conclusion about the division of work roles within your family.

2. Managing busy lives
Outline five strategies that a family could use to assist in managing the multiple roles of paid work and raising a family. You can use your own family or someone else’s.
3. Talking the talk
Define and describe the following terms:

- parent
- role integration
- wellbeing
- primary carer
- dual-income family
- socialisation
- roles
- gender role stereotype
- role reversal
- support

4. Stay-at-home dads
Read the newspaper article below. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being a stay-at-home dad.

Men most content to be breadwinners

T hey might share the housework, help look after the kids and drink wine as often as beer, but Aussie men still want to be the breadwinners, research shows.

A survey conducted by the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index (AUWI) found that having a paid job was very important to Australian men’s sense of wellbeing.

The research found that men aged 26-55 and not in paid employment were significantly less satisfied with life than those who were employed. Social perceptions of the roles people occupy and whether their situation is chosen or imposed influences wellbeing, said Robert Cummins of Deakin University’s Australian Centre on Quality of Life.

“Males who do not earn money from work have reduced wellbeing,” Professor Cummins, a co-author of the AUWI study, said.

“However, this effect is not as marked for women, who may be likely to gain wellbeing from the socially acceptable option of being homemaker and parent,” he said.

Men in paid employment reported a 75.4 percent satisfaction level with life compared with 67.7 per cent for non-earning males.

Professor Cummins said anything below 70 is in the range of risk of depression.

The AUWI is determined by a quarterly national survey of 2000 Australians that asks them how they feel about their lives and life in Australia.

The AUWI consists of a personal wellbeing index, measuring how satisfied people are with their personal lives, and the national wellbeing index, which measures attitudes to national life.

Overall the results of the survey, conducted in June 2003, found that wellbeing in Australia had risen to its highest level since surveys began in April 2001.

The personal wellbeing index reached 75.9 per cent compared with 73.2 per cent in April 2001.

Survey authors attributed the rise in the results to a sense of relief and satisfaction towards the rapid victory in the war against Iraq.

The Newcastle Morning Herald, October 2003.

5. Changing roles of Australian fathers
Investigate the role of fathers in parenting by examining fathers of your parents’ generation and your grandparents’ generation. Compare your results and compile a report on how fathering has changed.

6. Assistance for modern parents
Investigate one service provided within your community that assists people in the parenting process.

- What is the service and who provides it?
- What are the various aspects of the service?
- Is the service accessed by both mothers and fathers?