

Shiftwork and the Family

A shiftworker's lifestyle presents unique challenges with interpersonal relationships, especially with family members.

Over 80% of shiftworkers are very concerned with the impact shiftwork is having on the family.

Meeting the various expectations of the family as a parent or as a spouse, can be unrealistic and difficult to manage.

Shiftworkers often feel isolated and left out of everyday activities. This is most evident when working the nightshift.

Working the nightshift limits the time a worker can spend with a spouse who works during the day and school hours restricts involvement with the children.

In spite of these factors, there are many ways to help shiftworkers be full participants in their family's life.

Tips on Shiftwork and Family Life

- Involve the family with yourself and involve yourself with the family.
 - Help educate your family to realize that shiftwork is a lifestyle and that it is different from daytime work.
 - It is important for your family to understand that shiftwork is a "necessary evil" that it pays the bills and takes care of their everyday needs.
 - Keep the lines of communication open by holding family meetings. These might be held during meals or recreational activities.
 - Keep two calendars in your home. One for your work schedule and one for your family activities. This will help with making plans for both the short and long term.
 - Stay involved with your children's lives, by working with their teachers to set up daytime meetings and events like school plays.
- It is important to stay connected to your family when you have gone to work by leaving signs of your presence. This can be done by writing notes and letters. Put little surprises in your children's knapsacks or on their pillows.
 - If on the evening shift, you can call home every night, leave a video recording or a phone message to help the younger kids go to bed for their caregiver.
 - Don't blame your family members for irritations that relate to your fatigue from shiftwork. It is better to explain why you are tired and ask for their co-operation nicely.
 - Make sure you never take for granted the support you receive from your family. Ask for understanding and co-operation and express gratitude when it is offered.
 - Your attitude influences those around you. Show a positive attitude so your family will have one too!

Tips on Child Care and Shiftwork

For parents returning to the workplace, locating suitable and affordable child care nurtures the healthy development of their child.

Given the variety of shift schedules, selecting an appropriate childcare facility can be a challenge. Three main categories of childcare should be considered:

- Unlicensed or informal care, offered by a family member, friend or neighbour.
- Licensed home daycare, provided by a licensed agency.
- Group daycare centres, licensed and inspected by the provincial government.

When searching for childcare be sure to:

- Do a complete inspection of each daycare and assess which meets your criteria.
- Find out if the child care providers reflect your values and parental philosophy.

Information on child care can be ordered free of charge from Health and Welfare Canada. Or Social Services at 1-800-667-7155.

For more information contact a member of the SFL Shift Work Committee.

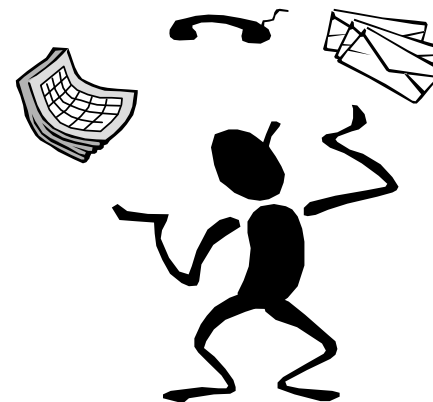
Visit our website at www.sfl.sk.ca under SFL Committees / Shiftwork.



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Shift Work Giving You and Your Family Problems?



**There's help with
your family life.**

