



LIONS GATE

Lifestyle. Care. Community. Tradition.

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS FOR “SANDWICH GENERATION CAREGIVERS”

Sending a child to college is bittersweet; pride swells alongside the pain of letting go. There’s so much to decide, plan, purchase and pack. Helping a son or daughter select the right school and prepare for the move is a milestone not to be missed.

But what about Mom? While parents ready their college-bound child, who makes sure an aging family member eats right and takes their medications?

Welcome to the “*Sandwich Generation of caregivers*”. Perhaps you’re a member and didn’t know it...

Sandwich Generation caregivers are people over the age of 40 who simultaneously support their own children while caring for an aging family member.

When they’re not raising kids or working, they spend dozens of hours each week picking up prescriptions, running errands, calling doctors, driving to appointments, researching care options, making sure medications are taken, doing laundry, preparing meals – and worrying.

Add to that financial obligations such as tuition, mortgage payments, home health services and saving for their own retirement, and – as you might imagine – sandwich caregivers are often overwhelmed, overworked and just plain exhausted.

Sound familiar? Fortunately, you have options for maximizing your time with your child – while also caring for Mom.

Delegate. Hold weekly family meetings and make a checklist. Include caregiving and college-related tasks. Divvy up the must-dos and hang the list for all to see. Keep others accountable to avoid heaping all caregiving responsibilities on one person’s shoulders – namely yours.

Ask for help. You can’t do it all. Know your limits. Setting boundaries with your parent, spouse, siblings and older children is crucial. Consider outside assistance when possible – the resources are endless. Financial planners or accountants can help manage your budget and set goals. Many communities offer caregiver support groups. Sharing feelings with others in the same boat helps manage stress and keep you connected.

A short-term respite stay at **YOUR COMMUNITY NAME** is a great way to hit pause for a few days while Mom or Dad receive the care they need. Additionally, respite care is a great option if you have to travel for longer periods of time. Learn more about short-term respite stays by calling me (**YOUR NAME AND PHONE NUMBER.**)

Take care of yourself first. It’s hard to care for others when you are not caring for yourself. Avoid burnout by eating right, exercising and getting plenty of rest. Listen to your body and mind. When you need a break, ask family members for a hand. Carve out time to recharge by enlisting the help of home health services, adult day

care and private care aides. Find services in your area by contacting your local agency on aging.

It's OK to laugh. Guilt, frustration and anger are normal feelings for caregivers. Recognize them, forgive yourself and let them go. Find ways to stay positive and lighten up whenever possible. Watch a silly movie or chat with a funny friend. Humor is one of life's best stress relievers.

Whether you are a seasoned Sandwich Generation caregiver or know you'll be one in a few years, keep these tips in mind to help find balance while caring for yourself and those you love most.