

## **Helpful Hints for Everyday Living**

(This is only a guide; choose items that will work for you.)

- Learn to do two things at once.
- Get an early start each morning. Wake up at least 30 minutes before children (not always an easy task!). If you are not a morning person, try to do as much as possible at night.
- Have a place for everything and everything in its place. Pick up as you go through the day and teach your family to do the same.
- Never handle anything twice.
- Put all clutter (mail, dishes, toys, etc.) away at night.
- Finish what you start.
- Clean one room at a time.
- Keep countertops as clear as possible. If you have kitchen gadgets you don't use often, put them in a cabinet or storage area.
- Start your day the night before...prepare lunches, clothes, diaper bag, set table for breakfast, make "To Do" list.
- Make "To Do" list every week in pencil. It is more flexible and less permanent than on your wall calendar, thus less guilt!
- Get you and your children into the routine of making beds, getting dressed and brushing teeth before coming to breakfast. Possibly have an extra set of toothbrushes in downstairs bathroom.
- Keep a calendar in a convenient spot and keep it updated. A pocket calendar or notepad in your purse is also helpful. Write numbers next to appointments on your calendar.
- Keep frequently used telephone numbers near the telephone.
- Buy any needed birthday, anniversary, and other greeting cards at the beginning of each month.
- Keep a file with all insurance policies, warranties, etc. along with necessary phone numbers.
- Keep a file for assorted items such as decorating ideas, party ideas, interesting articles, catalogs, etc.
- Put all needed cleaning supplies in each bathroom or carry a cleaning basket from room to room. Make sure you use appropriate childproof locks on cleaning supplies.
- Use plastic square containers or boxes in drawers, under cabinets, etc. to separate items.
- Have a "give away" bag in an upstairs closet or laundry room.
- Big jobs should be spaced. You may only be able to clean one closet a week or clean one set of cabinets at a time.
- Clean up after every meal (load dishwasher or wash dishes). Get older family members to help out.

- Learn to plan your jobs on appropriate days. If Wednesdays are always busy, don't plan housecleaning for that day. If Mondays are piano, soccer and/or scouts, plan an easy meal.
- Keep separate laundry baskets for colors and whites. It makes it easier to tell when you have enough for a load.
- Get in the habit of starting a load of laundry in the morning and in the evening, rather than trying to do all the laundry in one day. If you iron, iron the same day the few items washed that day rather than letting it pile up.
- Have at least one quick and easy meal in the freezer or cabinet at all times so that you can pull it out whenever needed.
- Clean out the refrigerator once a week.
- Use bath towels for a few days to eliminate a daily load of towels to wash.
- Keep all school related items in one place.
- Develop a "Saturday Box" for children's toys, favorite game, ball, etc. that are left on the floor. The item goes into the "Saturday Box" and is not returned until Saturday unless the child wishes to pay a fine to get it back sooner. This is especially good for older children.
- Keep in Mind...It takes three weeks to turn an action into a habit. Make a simple plan to get started; you can make changes along the way.

## **GENERAL TIPS**

- Relationships in the home are more important than a perfectly organized home.
- Something is better than nothing. In other words, focus on what you can do, not what you can't.
- If it isn't a priority, or the timing isn't right, let it go and don't worry about it. It can wait until another time.
- BE FLEXIBLE!

"Clutter: Things that are worth saving but haven't been put away,  
deposited on top of things that are not worth saving but haven't been  
thrown away, that have settled next to things you aren't sure what to  
do with."  
-J.C. Major

"Hard work is an accumulation of easy things you didn't do when you should have."

"The only place that success comes before work is in the dictionary."