



# How You Can Help When Your Mom or Dad is Unemployed

Sometimes through no fault of their own, parents find themselves out of work. A factory may close, sales may be down, or their health may fail. Whatever the cause, unemployment (not having a job) affects everyone in the family.

Unemployment may mean less money, more stress, and schedule changes. Your parent may behave like a different person. The anger and frustration he or she feels may come out in ways you have trouble understanding. Mom may yell about things that wouldn't have bothered her before. Dad may not pay attention when you're talking.

During unemployment, parents are worried about paying the bills and finding employment. They also may be feeling angry about losing their job.

Talking can help. Take time to talk to your parents and brothers and sisters about the changes taking place. Listen to what they have to say.

Recognize you can't change your parent's job situation. Help your family by trying to keep a positive attitude without whining or moping.

Sometimes you may feel alone and worried about what's happening to your family. Angry outbursts, depression, or abuse of alcohol are all examples of serious problems that can occur in families. These problems may require outside help. Your school counselor, teacher, minister, doctor, or neighbor can help you find the help you need. Don't hesitate to talk to them.

## Ways You Can Help

Here are some ideas of things you can do when money is short.

- Think about things that you've been spending money on that you can do without: movies, magazines, records, gas, brand-name clothes.
- Think about ways you can earn money: babysitting, mowing lawns, delivering papers, pet sitting, running errands.
- Think about ways to stretch the money your family has: sew or mend clothing, garden, babysit for younger brothers and sisters, prepare meals at home.

Little reductions add up. Here are some ways to reduce utility bills:

- Turn off lights, television, stereo, curling iron when not in use.
- Make fewer phone calls and keep them short.
- Take shorter showers to cut down on hot water use.
- Wash full loads of clothing in the washing machine.
- Dry clothes on clothes lines rather than in a dryer when possible.
- Take clothes out of the dryer immediately to cut down on ironing.

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- Hang your clothes up after wearing so they won't need to be washed as often and wear longer.
- Don't stand with the refrigerator door open while deciding what to eat.

Here are some ways to help reduce food costs:

- Drink water, or milk and juices, which are healthier and less expensive than soda.
- Don't waste food.
- Learn to eat foods that are more economical.
- Help prepare meals with lower cost ingredients.

Here are some things you can do to help relieve stress and tension at home:

- Think about the things you do that make other people in your family angry. Find ways to avoid doing those things.
- Do extra chores; help out without being asked.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Avoid picking fights.
- Give your parents some private time to discuss their problems.
- Do your best work at school so your parents can concentrate on finding a job rather than worrying about you.

No matter what your age, there are things you can do to help at home when one of your parents is unemployed.

## For More Information

This publication is one of 13 available in the set, *Managing Between Jobs*, from the Oregon State University Extension Service. The publications provide information to individuals and families facing underemployment and unemployment.

Each title is available without charge. You may order up to six no-charge publications without charge. If you request seven or more no-charge publications, include 25 cents for each publication beyond six. Send order and payment to:

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- EC 1391, *Setting Spending Priorities*
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- EC 1394, *Talking With Creditors*
- EC 1395, *Keeping a Roof Overhead*
- EC 1396, *Bartering*
- EC 1397, *Making the Most of What You Have*
- EC 1398, *Accepting Your Feelings*
- EC 1399, *Living Better With Stress*
- EC 1400, *Identifying Sources of Support and Friendship*
- EC 1401, *How You Can Help When Your Mom or Dad is Unemployed*
- EC 1402, *Deciding If Teens Should Work*
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