

[How to discuss job changes with your children](#)

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Your job search will affect your entire family. Here's how to talk to them about it.



I'll never forget the day my father told me he lost his job. I was nine years old, and he was taking me around the neighborhood to sell Girl Scout cookies. He told me that he left his company and was looking for a new position.

At the time I remember feeling scared because I knew my dad was the sole provider for our family. But I was more worried about how this news might affect the family vacation plans and weekly trips to McDonalds. I wasn't thinking about the stress my father must have been under, or how difficult it was to come home and explain to his

wife and children that he'd just lost his job.

Whether you've been [fired from a job](#) or left voluntarily, the prospect of starting a job hunt can be incredibly stressful, and this is especially true when you have a family to support. Here are three tips to help you discuss your [job search](#) with your family.

Be honest about the situation.

You're not doing anyone any favors by hiding the truth from your family. Address your unemployment head-on.

Dr. Laurence J. Stybel, a trained licensed psychologist and co-founder of career management firm [Stybel Peabody Lincolnshire](#), says that children between the ages of 8 and 15 are incredibly self-focused yet very sensitive to their parents' stress levels.

"Attempts to protect the children by saying "everything is ok" only leads to more stress, as parents try to cover up their tension in front of children," said Stybel.

Instead, Stybel suggests telling your kids that Mom or Dad is looking for a new job, acknowledging that there may be some stress along the way, but assuring them that everyone will be ok. This way, if your child senses tension, they won't accidentally draw the wrong conclusion and blame themselves for your stress.

Tailor your message.

Not every member of the family requires the same amount of information throughout the process.

While being completely open and honest with your spouse will help them support you through this difficult time, Carina Chivulescu, an HR professional with [The Expert Institute](#), suggests communicating only positive progress to your children during the job hunt, such as [landing an interview](#).

“Having a parent who is unemployed may make them nervous about the situation, Chivulescu said. Your kids don’t need to know about every setback and difficulty you experience throughout the entire job-search process.

Make it a family affair.

Chances are, you may be spending more time at home than before as you search for your next job. Treat your job hunt as a full-time job and block off time each day that’s dedicated to your search. This way, your family knows when you’re available to chat and when you are “working from home.”

Also, set aside time for the family each day. Tammi Van Hollander, a child play therapist at [Main Line Therapy](#), recommends scheduling family dinners as much as possible.

“They’re a great way to connect with the family and check in about everyone's day,” said Van Hollander.

If your kids ask how they can help, consider doling out some of the household chores, such as washing the dishes after dinner or taking out the trash.

The job search is sure to have its ups and downs, but knowing what to tell your children and when will help make the process smoother for everyone involved.