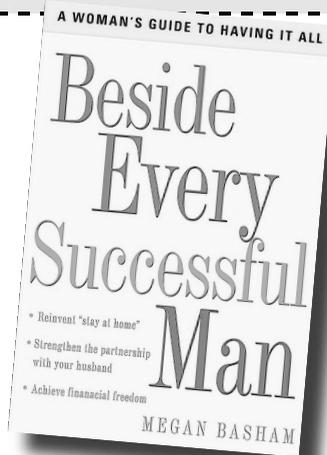


## Own It

Your weekly must-have



**BESIDE EVERY SUCCESSFUL MAN**  
by Megan Basham  
Crown Forum, \$24.95

Megan Basham is a woman with a plan for your man. Her assumption is that most women want to be at home with the children, leading an intensely domestic life. Who knows? I don't.

But it's certainly a popular idea that is being given voice in our culture. Only harri-dans insist that women should work from want — either from fear of it or just wanting to.

Basham's idea is that, by becoming a cross between a career counselor and motivational coach, you can guide your husband toward a fulfilling and, not incidentally, high-earning career which will allow you to retire home and indulge your inner Martha Stewart.

Hence the title "Beside Every Successful Man." The subtitle: "A Woman's Guide to Having It All."

Her own husband, she explained, was typical of many men in their 20s and 30s today in that he bounced around from job to job and was deeply unhappy in the ones where he made money. Mainly finance.

She took things in hand and in probing conversations discovered what he really wanted to be was a television weatherman. Together, they made sacrifices, and he did realize the dream. He now works on a morning show in Tucson, Ariz. It's a lovely story.

But as a general prescription? Hmmmm. Basham interviews the wives of very successful men to show the role their wives played in their rise. Obviously, she's not thinking of you guiding your husband toward a modest bump income. Rather, he really has to be positioned to bring home enough to support a comfortable, maybe really comfortable, lifestyle.

To do this you coach and encourage him, teach him to visualize the route to success, research his opportunities, and perform all sorts of ancillary duties that some men might just construe as pressure.

And even if you do manage to put him front and center on the wage-earning front, what about the double-D's and the E? Death, Divorce and, now, the Economy. With what's happening, and what's coming, sitting home might seem like taking a high-risk position in a volatile market. *Sherryl Connelly*



# KID CO-OPS

With the high cost of child care, working moms are sharing the responsibility with others

BY ELOISE PARKER

**W**ith more and more families needing two incomes to survive, many moms are exploring new avenues for affordable, cost-effective child care.

"In the last few months it's become one of the most popular topics of conversation, especially with the fear and anxiety around the economy," says Romi Lassally, founder of [Truemomconfessions.com](http://Truemomconfessions.com), who has seen her message boards awash with women wondering how best to handle spiraling child-care costs on ever-shrinking budgets.

"For one infant, child care can cost anywhere from \$3,800 to \$13,000 per year. For most families, it's the second largest budgetary item after the mortgage or rent," admits Sheila Lirio Marcelo, founder and CEO of [Care.com](http://Care.com), which helps families find local child care.

But for the many moms wondering how to tackle this dilemma, there are several options.

"Around 50% of families now turn to

relatives for help, but you need to make sure they can be consistent. You should also check in with your school districts and your county for low-income alternatives," suggests Marcelo. "You might qualify for some subsidization. Another option is talking to your employer about telecommuting, which is great if you have older kids and can get work done from home."

"One of the solutions I've seen has been that women are sharing baby-sitters or offering to take each other's kids," says Lassally, who herself shares parenting duties with her sister-in-law on weekends.

Brooklyn mom Sherry Davey took the idea of baby-sitter sharing one step further and founded a baby-sitting co-op with four other local moms.

"We work because we have to pay the bills, and we also work irregular hours," explains Davey, who now takes care of between three and seven children for a few hours a week. In return, her daugh-

ter Lily is taken care of for the same number of hours by each of the other moms.

"It's like a structured play date and I don't have to keep paying \$90-\$100 just to walk out of the door for a few hours," says Davey. "We were pretty formal about the rules from the beginning because we didn't want there to be any misunderstandings, so everybody keeps their hours. As soon as we've picked someone up, we text their mom and tell them we have them, so everyone knows where everyone's child is. All our kids are in the same class, so we know them really well. We know their home-work schedule and all of their dietary requirements and it's fun for them all to have someone to play with."

Almost three years after starting the co-op, Davey is convinced she has found the answer to her child-care woes.

"We've lucked out," she shrugs. "It really does take a village to raise children these days."

**'For many, it's the second largest budget item after rent.'**