

TOP THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT BUILDING A *career* AND A *family*

A REAL-TALK GUIDE FROM THE FORTÉ COMMUNITY

1. IT'S OK TO DROP THE BALL. ESPECIALLY IF IT'S A BOUNCY ONE.

- Some responsibilities are rubber (they'll bounce back).
- Some are glass (they'll break if dropped).
- Working moms say the key is learning the difference early so you can protect what matters most.



2. ASKING FOR HELP IS PART OF THE STRATEGY.

- You're not meant to do this alone.
- Whether it's a neighbor grabbing diapers, a partner taking the morning shift, or outsourcing tasks that drain your energy, leveraging help is a smart and strategic choice.



3. YOUR TIME IS VALUABLE, SO TREAT IT THAT WAY.

- Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should.
- Women shared that outsourcing (when possible) frees up time for the things only you can do: parenting, leading, resting, thinking, being human.



4. DECIDE TOGETHER WHAT MATTERS MOST.

- You can't be in two places at once. Even if we could teleport, it's not realistic to be at every event. But you can decide together what matters most: which school moments, routines, or traditions are non-negotiable.
- Shared expectations = less guilt, fewer surprises.



5. PREGNANCY AND PARENTAL LEAVE CAN SHARPEN YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS.

- Pregnancy and parental leave can be an unlock for values-aligned career growth.
- Skills like prioritization, advocacy, and agile problem-solving sharpen intensely — all highly relevant in the workplace.
- You may need to advocate for how those skills show up in your development and opportunities.



6. THERE'S NO PERFECT TIME – BUT YOU CAN CREATE OPTIONALITY.

- Timing looks different for everyone.
- For some, optionality means freezing eggs if it's covered by their employer.
- For others, it means planning support systems early or having honest conversations with a partner about who handles what.
- There's no single right path. Just different ways to create flexibility and choice.



7. DON'T MEASURE YOUR LIFE AGAINST SOMEONE ELSE'S HIGHLIGHT REEL.

- Every family, job, and season looks different.
- The fastest way to feel behind is to measure your life against someone else's.
- Your path is yours — and that's enough.



8. COMMUNITY MAKES THE HARD PARTS LIGHTER.

- More people want to help than judge.
- Sharing what's real builds connection, empathy, and support.
- You don't have to navigate this alone.



YOU'RE CARRYING MORE THAN MOST PEOPLE CAN SEE

Some days you'll feel capable. Some days you'll feel completely stretched. Both are part of building a career, raising a family, and trying to do both well at the same time. What surfaced throughout these conversations wasn't perfection. It was honesty, adaptability, support, and women figuring things out in real time. And perhaps that's the most important reminder of all: you were never meant to navigate this alone.

