

Stuck in the Middle: The Sandwich Generation Struggle

23% 

23% of U.S. adults are in the sandwich generation - caring for both kids and aging parents.

54% 

54% of people in their 40s are “sandwiched” between a parent age 65+ and dependent children.

3.6 h 

3.6 hours — average time spent on eldercare per day (not counting parenting or work).

29% 

29% of all caregivers nationally are juggling both child-rearing and eldercare.

2.5 M 

2.5 million Americans are actively providing care for children and aging parents at the same time.

What Is the Sandwich Generation?

Nearly 23% of U.S. adults are part of the sandwich generation—caring for both their own children and aging parents. In fact, more than half of people in their 40s have at least one parent age 65+ and are raising a child under 18 or supporting a grown child financially. That’s a lot of pressure in the middle.

The Unique Challenges

Time pressures:

On days they provide care, family caregivers average 3.6 hours on eldercare tasks—on top of parenting and work.

Financial strain:

Covering college tuition, household expenses, and parental care all at once.

Emotional stress:

Feeling guilty for not giving enough to either side, while neglecting your own needs.

It’s no surprise that sandwich generation caregivers report high stress, fatigue, and even health issues of their own.

Strategies for Balance

01

Prioritize and plan:

Map out weekly schedules that include self-care, not just tasks.

02

Share the load:

Lean on siblings, spouses, or extended family for caregiving and parenting support.

03

Leverage resources:

Professional home care, respite programs, and community services can provide essential relief.

04

Communicate openly:

Be honest with both parents and children about limits and expectations.

05

Let go of guilt:

With nearly 29% of caregivers in this dual role, you’re not alone. Perfection is impossible - love and consistency matter most.

Final Thought

The sandwich generation squeeze is real—but manageable. By planning ahead, accepting help, and caring for yourself, you’ll be better prepared to care for those who depend on you, on both sides of the “sandwich.”