



## YLD PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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# A Day in the Life: Young Lawyer Mothers

The day begins the same way most days begin for young lawyers who are mothers: not with the gentle hum of a coffee maker or an hour at the gym, but with a small human laying on top of us, snoring or drooling, and our brains asking an urgent question such as, “Is today a pajama day?” or “Did I remember to buy more yogurt?”

It is 6:27 a.m. We already feel behind.

Before our feet hit the floor, our brains are running parallel checklists. Birthday party gift for Saturday. Daycare snack sign-up (*was today pretzels or fruit*). Daycare forms. Pediatrician appointment next month. Is my child getting enough iron? Enough outdoor time? Enough unstructured play? Have I emotionally scarred them by serving the wrong color cup?

At the same time, Outlook emails that never stop coming. That contract that needs revisions. A deadline reminder, at least I remembered to put it on my calendar. The email that came in last night at 11:48 p.m. that starts with, “Just circling back...”

Welcome to the mental load.

By 7:30 a.m., one child is crying because their sock “feels weird,” the other because their sibling is crying. As I prepare my kids for daycare, I shout across the room asking my husband if he had a chance to look at the calendar invite that I sent him for the wedding next month, and I am served a *really, we’re talking about this now?* look in return. Breakfast is negotiated like a settlement conference. Somewhere in the chaos, we make it out the door, likely forgetting my own lunch in the process.

Drop-off at daycare is a study in controlled emotion. We hand over our most precious people to someone else so we can argue about money or liability. The irrational part of our brain whispers: *Are they okay? Are they loved? Will they nap? Did I pack the water bottle?*

The professional part of our brain reminds us: *You are late for court.*

At our office, we transform. Hair is smoothed. Voice is steady. We are competent, assertive, and prepared. We make arguments that affect real lives while half-wondering when the daycare will post pictures so we can see an update about the little people that own our whole heart. We answer emails,

take calls, bill our time. We respond patiently to questions that feel objectively dumb while knowing that tonight we will be asked, again, why the moon follows the car.

And in the hallway, or the courtroom gallery, or the bar association luncheon, we make eye contact with another one. Another young lawyer. Another mother.

There is a “How are you?” and then there is the look. You know it if you’ve seen it. It says: *I see you. I know you woke up before dawn. I know your phone is full of pictures taken moments before drop-off. I know you packed snacks with one hand while emailing with the other.*

By mid-afternoon, the world feels heavy. We read the news between calls or listened to it on the way to work. War. Violence. Loss. The kind of stories that hit differently when you have children and suddenly imagine everything through the lens of *What if that were my child?* The weight of it all presses down, but there is no time to linger. A client needs an answer. The clock is running. The billable hour waits for no one.

At 5:01 p.m., we switch gears again. Pickup hugs are fierce and grounding. We listen to breathless stories about playground politics while responding to emails in our head. Dinner is prepared (or procured). Baths happen. Books are read, sometimes with genuine enthusiasm, sometimes while silently drafting tomorrow’s to-do list.

By the time the house is quiet, the laptop comes back out. We work because we care. Because we chose this profession. Because we are good at it. Because we want our children to see mothers who contribute, lead, advocate, and build.

On Mother’s Day, we celebrate the moms who do this every day. Moms who carry the constant low-grade anxiety of doing two full-time jobs simultaneously and feeling like you are perpetually under performing at both. These women are doing something profoundly difficult with determination and grace. Young lawyers who are mothers carry a remarkable load, often invisibly, often without complaint, and almost always with humor that borders on survival instinct.

So, this month, from the Young Lawyers Division, I would like to give a heartfelt “Happy Mother’s Day” to all the young lawyer moms. I see you and am celebrating you today and every day. And next time our eyes meet across the room, we’ll share that all-knowing look again, equal parts solidarity and exhaustion, with just a hint of pride.

Happy Mother’s Day.

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