

NEW YORK (CNN/Money) – Does Mom need a raise?

Your mother's love is priceless, but the work she does costs plenty. If you outlined a job description and set a salary for the countless tasks, services and errands the average mom does for her family, you'd be talking big bucks.

"Only Clark Kent had to be Superman, but every mother has to be Superwoman," said Ellen Bravo, director of [9to5](#), the National Association of Working Women.

Ann Crittenden, author of *The Price of Motherhood*, thinks the U.S. should quantify the unpaid labor performed by mothers. She said the most sensible estimates she's seen value Mom's work at about \$60,000.

"[Motherhood is] a skilled, mid-level management job," she said.

But some studies push that figure sky-high, more in line with the salary of a top-notch CEO. Ric Edelman, chair of [Edelman Financial Services](#), takes an annual Mother's Day survey to quantify Mom's value in today's job market. According to his numbers for 2002, she deserves a whopping \$635,000.

That price tallies the salaries of the many occupations a typical mother performs. Edelman compiled a laundry list of "jobs" by chatting with financial planners and the mothers on his own staff.

According to his list, she's: raising her kids, cooking meals, keeping house, caring for pets, dispensing medication, going to meetings, managing family finances, providing transportation, assisting with homework, resolving family problems, keeping a schedule and maintaining family harmony.

"If we were actually writing a job description, what would it include?" Edelman asked. "Mothers are involved in a huge list of activities."

Crittenden calls the best test for valuing unpaid labor the "third person criterion", developed by economist Margaret Reid in 1934: if a third person could be paid to do the activity, then it is work. Cooking, cleaning, child care and yard work, for example, all fall into that category.

And all of the jobs Edelman listed, when performed by a third party, require compensation. According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), a financial manager, on average, rakes in about \$70,000 a year. A psychologist brings in about \$57,000. A bus driver makes about \$27,000. Start adding up salaries for each of those jobs, and you'll hit that \$635,000 figure.

But let's get real here. Mom works hard, so hard she rarely has a chance to put her feet up. But she's not working all day, every day, at *each* of these jobs -- instead, she's shifting from role to role. And Dad (or other family figures) hopefully helps shoulder the burden of parenting.

Whether it's \$60,000 or \$600,000, the reality, of course, is that the work mothers do to care for their children goes unquantified by the federal government. But activists like Crittenden and groups like 9to5 are, in fact, starting to ask for a "raise", by lobbying Congress for more widespread paid family and sick leave.

Just be glad Mom isn't asking for a salary from you.