

I am married, own my own house and have two children (6 and 5 years old). I want to invest for my kids' education and for their future. What do you suggest?

—Mike Bali, Sacramento, California

THE BEST WAY to take care of your kids is to make sure you first take care of yourself. By that I mean you and your wife must make saving for retirement your first priority. That is not selfish. It is smart and loving. If you put all of your funds into your kids' educations and that leaves you short of money in retirement, here's what is going to happen: You will need to lean on your grown kids for financial support. I don't think that's the future you really want for them, right?

After you get your retirement saving all set, if you still have money available to invest you should look into 529 savings plans. These are the single best way to save for college costs. You can learn more at the Web site www.savingforcollege.com.