



Tips for parents working from home with children

It is no secret that trying to balance work, parenting and personal life is far from easy, even at the best of times. In unprecedented times like this, the challenges are considerably heightened.

Overnight, with the closing of schools, parents are facing a juggling act of continuing work as well as teaching and looking after their children. Looking after our children, of course, is not a burden, however, balancing that with other daily commitments can become a bit overwhelming.

The below strategies will hopefully bring you a sense of calm and control in order to confidently manage the situation which many parents are facing.

Voice

Internal voice – the news and media tend to be hysteria-driven and cause panic. Find your inner voice of reason and calm to demonstrate to your children how to get through difficult times.

Voice of reason – Try avoid buying into the hysteria, acknowledge the “what if’s”, but remind yourself that you cannot control what “will be”. Instead, focus on what you can do as a parent (or family) to make the most of the situation we are faced with.

Speak up – Talk to managers/employees to set clear expectations and openly discuss any reasonable adjustments that can be made to make this time less stressful for you.

Confidence

In uncertain times, it is natural to feel unsure and insecure, about your role as an employee, manager, team member, partner and of course, a parent. Remind yourself of all the things you have accomplished in these roles, and do not lose sight of that. Try and shift your mindset to be grateful for this bonus time with your children. It won't be easy, but it'll be worth it.

Fear

It is human instinct to fear the unknown, but it is also human nature to be curious. Keep abreast with latest developments on the news, but do not allow yourself to feel overwhelmed by the hysteria and some of the negative articles that are rife across various forms of media.

When we feel fearful, it can helpful to distract yourself (and your family) with positive actions, such as supporting a local business, helping neighbours, collecting food for families in need, baking biscuits to give to elderly neighbours and the like.

Space

Guidelines are encouraging social distancing, so be conscious of where and how you interact with others and make smart, safe choices for your children.

Also, if you are working at home with children around, maybe come up with some incentives for them to help with chores, clean their rooms, or any other task that can distract them and give you some space while you work.

If possible, encourage children to be outdoors where they can. For you, too, some fresh air could also help clear the mind.

Parenthood

I bet you have all attempted (being the operative word) to achieve control and structure in your home lives, however, perhaps now, you may think about weaving some simplicity and flexibility into your parenting approach. Trying times call for adjusted approaches to the "norm". Multi-tasking is a skill that parents quickly learn, but in the current situation, this may need to be taken up a notch!

Expectations:

Try set realistic expectations with your children. If you need to be left alone to dial into meetings etc, ensure they know that they how you expect them to behave and what time you will have available to spend with them. Base your expectations of a productive day on how much actual uninterrupted working time and learning time you get in a typical day.

Schedule:

Try your best to collate a detailed schedule for things like learning time, play time and screen time. Some structure can be helpful for both you and your children. School-aged children may feel more involved and in control if you call a "meeting" where they feel they have some say in how their schedule is designed in terms of schoolwork and learning.

Remember: By working remotely, you are gaining back hours of commuting, work tends to be more structured with scheduled calls/meetings rather than ad hoc "let's grab a room" type meetings. So your day can also be more structured to help manage your time, and so you can make time to spend with your children whilst also ensuring you get necessary work done. Some meetings tend to get set up at their usual time, so early mornings can be set aside for time with your children, you can have lunch with them and so on.

Activities:

Children naturally have a lot of energy, so allow time for them to engage in activities at home. For school-aged children, Joe Wicks (The Body Coach) is offering free kids exercise (PE) classes at 9am every week day starting this week. These will be on his [YouTube channel](#). For more information on this, you can search for "The Body Coach" on Facebook. There are lots of interactive and fun kids exercise classes on his channel too.

For younger children, who may be used to some daily structure at child care, perhaps allow them time to "free-play" and explore their universe. We underestimate the concept of self-entertainment.

**We hope that you can find some comfort in the fact that this situation is not permanent.
We will send over more tips and resources over the coming weeks.**

