



Tips & Tricks on Working from Home with Kids

Kids are off school. You are working remotely, possibly for the first time ever. Everyone is staying home to stay safe, and trying to find a new normal. Juggling your responsibilities won't be easy, but by following some tips and tricks, you can establish some household best practices to make the transition easier for everyone.

- 1) **Provide the right tools.** Just as you need the right tools for work, your kids need the right tools to succeed. Depending on their ages and your school district this could mean:
 - Readings and/or assignments
 - A computer or tablet for virtual learning, loaded with the correct software or app
 - Essential school supplies such as pens, pencils, notebook paper, calculators, etc.
- 2) **Provide structure.** Almost everyone thrives on routine and structure, especially children. Even if you don't follow the same hours as a typical school day, having an established weekday schedule and trying to stick to it could help. Be sure to include:
 - Assigning household responsibilities, such as chores
 - Hygiene routines, including regular bathing and frequent hand-washing
 - Chances for movement, including time outside and/or virtual exercise routines geared toward kids like dance or yoga
- 3) **Timely screen time.** While we love our phones, computers, tablets, and video games, and can use them for productive learning and socializing, too much can lead to overstimulation or lethargy in kids. If possible, try to limit screen time to the afternoons or evenings.

If you do need to rely on screen time more frequently, there are many educational resources to help them avoid zoning out while watching mindless YouTube videos. Some include:

- **Math:** prodigygame.com
- **Science:** kids.nationalgeographic.com
- **Reading:** squigglepark.com
- **History:** historyforkids.net

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- 4) **Alternate supervision.** If your spouse or partner is also working from home, consider childcare split shifts, where one parent is responsible for kid supervision in the morning and the other in the afternoon, or in 2-hour chunks. Alternating supervision responsibilities allows each parent time to focus primarily on work, and establishing the routine ahead of time allows you to schedule phone calls or video conferences when you know you're less likely to be disturbed.
- 5) **Accept and communicate.** Accepting the fact that life, work, and our kids' educations aren't going to be "normal" for awhile might make the difficulties of our new realities easier to face. During a crisis, needs and capacities are going to fluctuate and that's okay. Be sure to communicate both your goals and needs with your partner, children, colleagues and supervisor.

Some Dos and Don'ts:

Do have meetings both with your family and colleagues to establish routines and expectations.

Don't do everything at the last minute and hope it all works out.

Do ask about flexible working hours.

Don't expect your team to know your specific circumstances and needs without communicating them.

Do encourage kids to move/exercise each day and get outside—and make sure you do the same!

Don't let social distancing slip into tons of screen and couch time.

Do have dedicated spaces for work and learning. Try to keep these spaces uncluttered.

Don't work in your bed, or on your couch, since these will ultimately lead to soreness.

Do embrace your children's independence. See this as a chance for the whole family to learn and grow.

Don't do everything for your family. It'll lead to burnout.

Do expect some chaos, frustrations, anxiety, and even possibly meltdowns.

Don't expect everyone to handle this well 100% of the time, and try to be aware of signals that your children might be struggling and need to talk, or adjust their new routine.

Do reach out to friends and family and try to connect apart from social media.

Don't leave the news on in the background all day.

Do practice self-care.

Don't ignore your needs for everyone else's.

