



At Home: Working Parents, Working with Kids

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Some practical tips on how to balance working from home while working with your kids.

Unprecedented change in how we work has shifted nearly all of us to working remotely from home. Our kids are out of school, too. Many have child care covered – through babysitters, family or friends – while many are attempting to juggle full-time remote work with full-time child care.

On Day 1 of “at home” learning, or homeschooling, many parents quickly expressed their appreciation for teachers and their role in educating their kids. It turns out that, when dissecting a school schedule, the educational parts of most schools take up around three hours a day.

So what can working parents do to keep sane, keep productive in their job and keep kids learning and engaged? Here are some practical tips that may be helpful.

Work

- **Ask for flexibility in scheduling work and meetings** – it’s highly likely that many of your work colleagues are in the same situation. Explore how you can bundle meetings together (or even better, reduce meetings), work asynchronously or work in blocks of time.
- **Take breaks** – a little known truth when working from home is that we often work *more* hours. Try to take some breaks and spend them with kids. It’ll be a relief for you and them.
- **Avoid multitasking with work and kids** – it sounds tempting to mix business and

pleasure, though both will likely suffer and you'll have to invest more time in each.

- **Have a dedicated workspace** – if you have the space, a separate area for work can make things easier on you and your kids.

School

- **Spend time with your kids** – mornings are when most core learning happens at school, so try to start off the day right by fully engaging with your kids.
- **Have a daily schedule** – kids have schedules with lists at school and tend to react and perform better when they know what's in store.
- **Kids need breaks, too** - they're kids, after all. Avoid trying to pack all learning into one block. Let them do fun things and use their imagination. Kids are great at that.
- **Mark off completed items** – kids love progress, so let them check off things they've completed and reward them with breaks and fun activities.
- **Boredom is good** – it's unnecessary to overprogram your kids down to the minute. Let them be bored and free play.
- **Technology is your friend** – there's near-infinite kids activities online, in the form of lessons, books, games, apps, podcasts and more. Let technology be on your side so your kids can learn in a new way, so you can do your own work and so you can be happy about both.

Of course, speaking from experience, this is all easier said than done. Don't feel bad if you're just doing a few things. Your kids still love you and appreciate the time they have with you. We're in a new – hopefully temporary – way of working and the best plan is a flexible one.

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