

Working from home with kids during the pandemic

As we continue to live with the realities of this pandemic, many of us are still working from home, maybe for some or all of the time. Given the restrictions, many are working alongside their family members, including children. While it may be fun to label our children our co-workers and get on with business, it can be a very delicate balancing act. At times it may feel like we are struggling to maintain an appropriate balance. Let's explore some ways to shift the balance to the positive.



Preparation:

Take a clear assessment of the various needs. Your children's needs, your workplace's needs and make sure to include your own needs. How long can your child realistically occupy themselves? What are your resources and supports? What phase of pandemic management are we in, and what will that mean for our family?

Flexibility:

The more we can approach these unpredictable times with flexibility, the better we'll be able to adapt. Maybe you and your partner need to tag-team your workday? Maybe you sort your day out in three or more working chunks (depending on how long your child can occupy themselves)? Maybe you resort to bribing your child with toys or screen time? The truth is that we have all had to shift our expectations of ourselves and others amid this life transition. The most important way to be flexible is a flexible mind. We are often so judgmental of ourselves and our situation. It's time to be self-compassionate and forgiving. No one is operating at ideal conditions, and we all struggle with some facet of our lives that the pandemic has impacted. We need to be kind to ourselves when we struggle and feel we don't show up in our lives or with our family the way we want to. In these moments, acknowledge and validate your struggle or that of your kids. Actively say, "I'm (or you are) frustrated/sad/disappointed things didn't turn out the way we wanted. I can learn something from this." The upside of flexibility means we are not stuck doing things "the one right way." We can learn from it and try something else without loading on the internal judgment.

Embrace:

When we allow ourselves to explore these options, embrace the positive that shows up. Maybe your kids are learning to resolve their sibling conflicts (sure it's because you can't get off the work call to intervene, but take the win!) Maybe you are learning how to better prioritize tasks. Or maybe it's seeing another side of your child's personality or resilience. Whatever it is, take our pandemic perks where you can.

Support:

If you notice your anxiety or negative self-talk is becoming overwhelming, that makes sense in this context of the ongoing transition. Take active care and reach out. Connect with those you trust about how you're doing. Consider contacting EAP for emotional support, as well as skills and strategies to manage during this difficult time.

For further reference, including practical and helpful suggestions for various ages of kids:

<https://www.poynter.org/business-work/2020/how-to-try-to-work-from-home-with-kids-in-a-pandemic/>

Contact Information:

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