

Purpose

Transitioning to working from home is an adjustment for the entire family. Your work and family generally live in two different worlds, and now they are crashing together. Finding ways to juggle blending your work life with your parental duties can be vital to your continued success within your job. Below is a list of suggestions to help make the transition and balance easier and manageable.

Tips for Working from Home with Children

Create Structure

A constant mingling of work and home life is confusing for children and exhausting for you. Structure your day in a way that works for both and clearly communicate this schedule with all parties, including children. Knowledge is power in this situation. Knowing and sharing with others which hat you are wearing at different times of the day creates a powerful understanding.

Take Predictable Breaks

As much as we may wish it to be true, it is unreasonable to expect children of any age to leave you uninterrupted for the entire eight-hour workday. Much like restroom and snack breaks, engaging with your children is going to be part of your workday now that you work from home. Schedule these breaks and share the times with your children. Knowing they have a spot in your schedule will not only be comforting for them but also will encourage them to wait for your break if they need something that is not urgent.

Offer Visual Cues

Channel your inner teacher and help your children be more successful by providing visual cues. These cues can be small such as an open/closed sign on your door and a red or green circle on your workspace to show when you are on a video call. Engage their sense of touch by offering “interruption tickets” they must hand you when they just have to interrupt. Some children may also be comforted by a printed copy of your schedule to see when your break times will be. You can even be creative in your use of sensory engagement with small treats or rewards.

Provide Distractions

Be sure that there are a variety of safe and engaging activities for your children while you are working. Consider brainstorming a list of acceptable activities they do not need to ask permission to do while working. Keep this list posted for your children to have a visual reminder of their options. For younger ones, create several small boxes of toys, games, and puzzles that you can switch out often during the day to keep them entertained.

Follow Through

Kids notice when adults don't follow or enforce the rules. In general, stick to the guidelines you created and follow through with integrity on the rewards and consequences you offered. If it's work time, they will notice if you aren't working. Likewise, if you allow interruptions sometimes, they will think that it is acceptable all the time. Limit confusion and frustration by creating boundaries and sticking to them.

Lead with Love

Be understanding and flexible during this transition. Offering calm reminders and kind redirection rather than yelling will help reassure and comfort your children while also modeling healthy habits. Your children will be watching and learning from the ways you confront frustration and stress. Be the role model you want them to have and instill the life lessons you want in their back pocket as they grow.