



As a response to the growing crisis and the many shelter-in-place orders, most employers have switched to remote work arrangements for their staff. In addition, most schools are closed and instituting remote learning requirements. While these measures are necessary for the health and safety of the community, it can make for some challenging work arrangements. Below are some tips to help you get some work done while your kids are at home with you.

1. **Create a Schedule** – Creating and keeping to a schedule is key to success. Have kids get up and get dressed at the same time as when they were in school or daycare. Schedule time through-out the day for kids to be engaged in other activities. Try to get the majority of your work done during the time your kids are engaged or have downtime.
2. **Communication is Key** – when you have kids at home it is important to communicate, even over-communicate, especially about schedules and tasks. Let co-workers and clients know they may hear kids in the background on your conference call. Let your employer know what your schedule is with your kids so they are aware when you may be more, or less, responsive.
3. **Set Boundaries** – If you have toddlers or older kids you will have to set some boundaries with your kids. Let your kids know that sometimes during the day you will need to be on “do not disturb” and what that means for them. If you have a home office with a door, consider putting a sign on the door to indicate when kids are not allowed to disturb you. For young kids, you could use picture signs like stop and go, red and green lights, or thumbs up or down.
4. **Be Flexible** – You may want to consider being more flexible with things like screen time, work-ing hours, and school hours. It may be necessary to let your kids have more screen time so you can be on a conference call or video meeting. Maybe you’ll need to work some after dinner or after the kids go to bed. These adjustments are okay.
5. **Take Breaks** – Be sure to schedule breaks in your routine for you and the kids to be together. Especially for small kids, they may not understand why you are not spending all day with them. Allowing for some together time will help.
6. **Plan Activities** – Plan activities throughout the day that don’t require your full-time supervision. The below age-appropriate ideas allow you to focus for a while on work tasks while the kids are engaged in them.
 - For babies – naps, swings, bouncy chairs, and videos like Baby Einstein videos.
 - Toddlers to school-age – educational shows or online games and apps.
 - Older kids – school platforms, reading, non-violent videogames that encourage social connectivity, like Minecraft.
7. **Prioritize Tasks** – Prioritize those items that are the most important to complete and schedule the above activities for when you have those vital tasks to accomplish.
8. **Use What Help You Have** – If your partner is also working from home now consider alternating shifts with the kids. Or, are there others in the household who can help like older kids, or a roommate, perhaps? If you’re a single parent is there a trusted neighbor who could help? Or, consider setting up a virtual playdate where grandma or a favorite uncle could “play” with the kids while you take that important call.
9. **Set Realistic Expectations** – Surviving may be more important than thriving for the time being. Things are not normal right now, don’t pretend that they are. Be honest with yourself and others about what can realistically get done during the day.
10. **Understanding and Empathy** - Understand that these are challenging times and we are still trying to figure everything out, but we are all in this together. Approach this current challenge with empathy both with your colleagues as well as yourself.

Remember, your Employee Assistance Program is here to help you and your household members manage the stress that can come with a major transition. If you need additional information, please call MINES and Associates at 1-800-873-7138.