

Working from home: the remote learning survival guide for families

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Available <https://childpsychologist.com.au/working-from-home-the-lockdown-survival-guide-for-families/>



How can we create a productive space for the whole family to work from home? Maintaining your child's education, your ability to be productive in the workforce and your family's financial stability as never been so challenging.

Many more parents are working from home alongside their children. Quirky Kid has developed our Top 5 Tips to help families prepare, adapt and conquer working and studying from home together.

Tip #1: Plan a daily schedule together

Routines are essential for children's growth, development, and sense of normality. To help with creating health routines, each night, sit as a family and map out a schedule or the following day (and support all family members to stick to it!)

Include tasks for the whole family and allow all family members to contribute ideas to the schedule. Use visual images and/or colours to make the schedule fun and accessible. For two parent households, alternating 'work shifts' may be helpful.

Tip #2: Include varied activities in the family's day

To make the most of focus and motivation while working from home together, start the day with **cognitive stimulation**. This will help siblings get along and adults to be more patient. Some ways of doing this include:

- **Complete academic activities first.** Adults and children are more able to sustain effort and achieve desired outcomes earlier in the day. Parents may need to work before dawn to meet deadlines before children wake up. It may also be helpful to speak with your child's teacher to access more online learning options. Check in with your young person every 10-15 minutes, depending on their attention span, to praise their ability to work independently.
- **Get physical.** For younger children combine your child's interest in Pokémon, Spiderman or Mermaids with a themed yoga class.
- **Keep social.** Support all family members to remain connected with each other and the outside world. Family mealtimes and scheduled breaks are an opportunity to take part in a video call to grandparents or school friends.
- **Plan ahead.** Parents need time alone too! Make a "Do not Disturb" sign and explain the rules and reasons for this boundary in advance. Rewards for respecting boundaries are recommended. Think fun family activity over food rewards.

Tip #3: Proactively manage conflict

With family members in such close proximity, conflicts may arise.

- Create a calm zone under a table or inside a cupboard with quiet music, pillows and picture books. Your young person might like to make their own cozy space behind a lounge or up a tree. Encourage creativity and a Plan B for wet weather.
- To reduce sibling rivalry, create separate workstations featuring a long-term project for each individual, such as a complex puzzle, Lego build or similar.

Tip #4: Have a definite start and end to the workday!

To reward your child for their focus throughout the day, try to end your workday at the same time as they end their school day. This will prevent children from feeling frustrated by parents who continue to work when they're ready to play. Pushing back on your work commitments may be required for the good of your own mental health.

Suggesting alternative work hours, such as 1-9pm, may suit your situation better and your workplace may be more accommodating than your own children.

Tip #5: Support the emotional needs of the whole family

During these periods of uncertainty, supporting the emotional needs of the whole family is important to ensure everyone continues to thrive. To support your child:

- Take care of your own mental health! Children are highly perceptive to the emotional states of their parents.
- Open the lines of communication and allow them to speak about their concerns.
- Some children may find it difficult to articulate how they are feeling. Play-based activities such as 'messy play' (eg; slime, playdough, water-play) and art tasks (eg; drawing and painting) may help children express themselves and process how they are feeling.