**For helpful tools, resources and educational opportunities to assist with your parenting journey, connect with the** [**Children’s Bureau**](https://www.childrensbureauilservices.org/)**.**

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**Mastering Work From Home While Taking Care of Toddlers and Babies**

Getting quality work done is hard at the best of times. Distractions abound, especially if you’re working from home. Add small children to the mix and it can quickly turn into a herculean task. Kids don’t understand boundaries and require around-the-clock attention. Working and managing your kids isn’t easy and takes some getting used to. Below are some tips on how you can do both like a pro without dropping the ball:

**Structure is your best friend**

Schedules and routines are important for kids, according to the [ECLKC](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/importance-schedules-routines). They foster security and stability. They also benefit you, the parent. [With the right schedule](https://www.parents.com/parenting/home/schedules-for-kids-at-home-to-balance-school-work/), you can take care of your work needs as well as leave enough time to nurture your child. Make sure you design your schedule together with your partner.

A good schedule has the following elements:

* Your kids’ needs – including playtime, education, and nurturing.
* Meals and chores – who is going to do them and when?
* Each partner’s responsibilities – what will be done and when?
* Key work times – are partners free to attend to critical work tasks?
* Rest and entertainment – both necessary for the parents’ health.

**Handle interruptions well**

No battle plan survives first contact with the enemy, as they say. Even with the most flexible schedule, you’re going to have to deal with interruptions. Your baby may start crying in the middle of a video meeting. Your toddlers may pick a fight with each other when you’re neck-deep in work. As a parent, it’s essential to [prepare yourself](https://www.lifehack.org/486797/a-parents-5-step-guide-to-emergency-preparedness) mentally and train yourself to react appropriately to unforeseen situations.

An excellent way to handle emergencies is to [learn how to respond](https://www.tradebe.com/blog/safety/learn-to-respond-not-react) instead of engaging in a knee-jerk reaction. It’s a difficult skill to pick up but well worth the effort. It involves maintaining a state of calm internally despite contrary external stimuli. For example, a knee-jerk reaction would be cursing up a storm and yelling at your partner to attend to your crying baby. A response would be taking a deep breath, putting your work on hold, taking care of your child, and then coming back quickly.

**Learn to deal with distractions**

There are interruptions that you need to take care of immediately and then there are minor distractions like family members and background noise. Further, working from home is working in relative isolation, which is a different ball game altogether from working in a crowded office with common-goal energy. You may require extra self-discipline to get any [real work done](https://www.inc.com/minda-zetlin/work-from-home-wfh-work-at-home-drawbacks.html), as Inc. can attest.

Setting simple mental intentions to avoid distractions can work wonders. Tell yourself that you won’t be distracted if something minor comes up and you won’t be. Always keep your end goal in mind – getting work done, so you can provide for your family. Doing away with external sources of distraction like TV screens and cell phones can also help. Learn how to [focus](https://www.betterup.com/blog/15-ways-to-improve-your-focus-and-concentration-skills) for the best results.

**Know your limits**

Make sure you don’t bite off more than you can chew. For instance, if you've decided to go back to school for an MBA as a means to advance your career – a common goal for many parents – an online business degree program is [easier to manage](https://www.wgu.edu/online-business-degrees.html) rather than an on-campus program. With this option, you can maintain your current job responsibilities, learn at your own pace, and still have plenty of time left over for your kids. It's true that this can push graduation back a bit, but that’s the price to pay for being an awesome parent.

**Be kind to yourself**

Caring for children is a difficult responsibility. Doing it from home with the recent chaos from the pandemic makes it harder still. Be [kind to yourself](https://positivepsychology.com/how-to-practice-self-compassion/). You may make mistakes but that’s okay. Give it time and give yourself some leeway.

Remember that you’re never alone. If it’s all getting to be too much, you can always get help externally – whether from a family member or a hired helper. Focus on [mastering your day](https://buffer.com/resources/daily-success-routine/), every day, and you will achieve a great work-life balance – whether you’re working from home or otherwise.

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