

Working From Home as a Parent and/or Caregiver Toolkit

COVID-19

COVID-19 is creating unique challenges to the way we live and work. Many parents and caregivers are working from home with kids also at home right now. This may cause feelings of guilt due to being at home, yet not being able to give our kids our full attention. We might also feel a sense of anxiety and stress as our caring duties increase, while expectations to perform at work stay the same.

This toolkit will provide useful tips to help balance work and family, while also offering interesting and creative activities to do with the kids.

Here are some helpful tips for you

- Plan a realistic schedule for your workday. Write down key tasks you want to complete each day.
- Try working on these tasks early in the day. Completing tasks earlier on will keep you motivated throughout the rest of the day.
- Every day is going to be different, and sometimes things don't go to plan. When this happens, be kind to yourself. Accept that challenges may arise and discuss with your boss how you can troubleshoot in future.
- Just because you're at home doesn't mean you need to clean throughout the day. Remember, if you normally cleaned the place when you got home from work or on the weekend, stick to that routine.
- Make sure that you are still doing things that you would normally do on a regular work day. Try to keep to a routine as much as possible; this will make the transition of returning to work easier.
- At times you may need to make allowances to get through the working day. This may be a little more screen time for the kids. As a backup, try finding other activities or toys that keep the little ones occupied.



- Try to spend at least 10 minutes of every hour with your kids. It's ok if that's not possible some days.
- Have a conversation with your manager about flexible working arrangements. The possibility of starting earlier, then finishing earlier gives you more time with the kids in the afternoon.
- Our work and living routines have dramatically changed during COVID-19, these changes may continue to be in place for some time. Have a conversation with your organisation to find out how you can work through this together.
- Share the load – you don't have to do it all. Ask your partner, or family to help as well. E.g. share cooking responsibilities or ask someone to help put the kids to bed, this will provide time to wrap up some work items.



- Change your scenery every now and then to break up the day. Work outside or sit on your lounge. This situation is temporary, don't stress.
- Stay connected and keep in touch with your work colleagues. Link in via Microsoft Teams, Skype, Zoom, or have a chat over the phone.



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Plan activities for the kids that don't require supervision

You can't be everywhere at once. Planning activities for the kids that don't require much supervision is a win-win because it allows you to focus on work while also providing activities to help entertain your kids. Just because you can't give your kids your undivided attention right now, doesn't mean you're not being a good parent. You're doing the best you can with the tools you have.



- Board game – set up a board game for everyone to play together.
- Download educational games and apps that are age appropriate (check out the last page for some ideas).
- Get the kids into a routine of having a nap/wind down time each day.
- Colouring competition – ask the kids to do some colouring in and have a mini competition at the end of the day.
- Virtual playdate – arrange a time for your kids to call or facetime their friends.



- Have your kids write stories about how they're feeling, yarn to them about it.
- Puzzles – excellent for brain training and a fun way to improve coordination.
- Download Minecraft or activities that keep the kids socialising online with their friends.
- Have a reward system for when the kids finish their homework.
- TV time – allocate a period of time in the day for your kids to watch TV. The Wiggles are a jam for the little ones.



- Homework – If there is something your kids need help with, leave it for when the working day is over. If you don't know how to help your kids with something in their homework, it's ok. Take note of it and mention it to the teacher when they go back to school.
- Set up some arts and crafts activities in a room and play some background music that your kids enjoy.
- Movie time – set up a mini-movie room at home. Put on a movie, close the blinds and cook up popcorn for everyone to share.



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Working from home as a parent can be hard, however it is achievable with the right tools. We hope these hacks will help to make your life at home a bit easier during this challenging time. For more general self-care tips on how to stay happy and healthy, see our self-care toolkit at www.ahmrc.org.au/publication/self-care-toolkit



Example of a daily Schedule

One of the most important reasons for keeping a to-do list is for organisation. Organising your tasks with a list can make everything much more manageable and make you feel grounded. If you don't get to something, make it a priority for the next day.

Time	Work Activity	Family Activity	Done
6.00 AM			
6.30 AM		Prepare breakfast for yourself and kids.	
8.30 AM		Start the kids day (early start, more chance of day naps)	
9.00 AM	Respond to emails	Kids can watch TV	
10.00 AM		Enjoy time with kids	
10.10 AM	Make needed phone calls	Educational apps for kids	
11.00 AM	Meet with boss	Kids do homework	
11.30 AM		Prepare lunch for kids	
12.00 PM		Eat lunch with kids	
1.00 PM	Attend Important meeting	Nap time	
1.30 PM		Enjoy time with kids	
2.20 PM	Make more needed phone calls	Kids call friends, virtual playdate	
3.20 PM	Call Colleague for a chat	Kids do homework	
4.20 PM	Complete Invoices	Arts and Crafts for kids	
5.00 PM		Prepare dinner	

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Educational Games and Apps

Age: 3 +

Daily Vroom

Parents get great brain-building tips for little kids.

www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews/daily-vroom

Khan Academy Kids

Creative early-learning activities engage and inspire.

www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews/khan-academy-kids

Picture Dots

Fun, free tool ignites curiosity, creativity, and STEAM.

www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews/picture-dots

Age: 4+

Breathe, Think, do with Sesame

Adorable monster de-stresses kids with Sesame Street style.

www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews/breathe-think-do-with-sesame

Think & Learn Code-a-pillar

Dancing caterpillar gives young kids easy intro to coding.

www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews/think-learn-code-a-pillar

Age: 5+

Khan Academy

Excellent tutorials on math, humanities, and more, for free.

www.commonsemmedia.org/website-reviews/khan-academy

Other

Read with Phonzy: Kids Reading Game

New readers practice fluency with simple exercises.

www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews/read-with-phonzy-kids-reading-game

Tommy the Turtle – learn to code

Cutesy coding intro just barely scratches the surface.

www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews/tommy-the-turtle-learn-to-code

Age: 6+

Stop Breathe and Think – Kids

Kids name emotions and go on great, mindful missions.

www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews/stop-breathe-think-kids-focus-calm-sleep

Reading Racer

Cool tech supports independent readers, still has glitches.

www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews/reading-racer

Age: 7+

Prodigy Maths

Fantasy game helps kids become math wizards.

www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews/prodigy-math-game

Think! Think!

Varied brain training games challenge, adapt, overwhelm.

www.commonsemmedia.org/app-reviews/thinkthink

Vocab spelling city

Varied brain training games challenge, adapt, overwhelm.

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/website-reviews/vocabularyspellingcity>

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Quick and easy recipes to feed the family

It's sometimes difficult to find the time to make meals for the family amongst everything else going on. Below is a list of nutritious, delicious meals that only take 15 minutes to prepare; makes a great lunch the next day too.



Name	Link
Easy fried rice	www.taste.com.au/recipes/easy-fried-rice-3/5c89aa24-1de3-4ddc-9362-e68dfc489dc1?r=quickeasy/biccuul7
Classic Shepard's Pie	www.taste.com.au/recipes/classic-shepherds-pie/709d4226-8df3-47ef-bbb5-be1a307c42c9?r=quickeasy/biccuul7
Sweetcorn and Spinach Fritters	www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/toddler-recipe-sweetcorn-spinach-fritters
Homemade Pizza with Veggie Faces	www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/toddler-recipe-easy-homemade-pizza-veggie-faces
Mini Quiche and Vegetables	www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/toddler-recipe-mini-egg-veg-muffins
Peanut Butter Chicken	www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/peanut-butter-chicken
Easy Curried Sausages	www.food.com/recipe/simple-curried-sausages-213467
Honey Mustard Chicken	www.recipetineats.com/honey-mustard-chicken
Bangers, Mash and Vegetables	mumslounge.com.au/lifestyle/food/sausages-with-onion-gravy-mashed-potatoes-vegies
Chicken and Vegetable Stir Fry	tasty.co/recipe/chicken-veggie-stir-fry
Lasagne, Chips and Salad	www.taste.com.au/recipes/lasagne-5/9c177143-aebe-4321-9d23-c50435c41835
Spaghetti Bolognese	www.recipetineats.com/spaghetti-bolognese

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Quick and easy family games to catch up with your kids



Name	Description
Touch and feel boxes	Start by putting interesting objects into containers that a child must reach into and identify by touch. Have the kids decorate them, just make sure to cut out a child-sized hand hole on the side of the box beforehand. Place an item in each box and have your kids take turns guessing what the items are. Encourage questions and offer clues as needed.
Balance beam	This is a more easily set up indoor game than you might think. Using painter's tape (go gentle on flooring), tape down a line of any length, and have a blast. Challenge your child to only walk on the line all the way to end.
Cards games	Go Fish
	Memory
	UNO
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Building	You don't need a fancy building set for this. Popsicle stick cities, card towers, even buildings out of blocks, or indoor forts out of boxes or pillows, will do just fine. If you want to get competitive, whoever builds the highest tower wins.
Sock toss	Roll up a sock and place a bucket in one place. Have your kids move back a few steps and take turns at throwing the socks into the bucket.
Treasure hunt	Hide treats, or coins in your backyard and send your kids to find them. Rest assured you will get at least an hour's work done.
Making chores fun	After dinner, do a "10-minute tidy." Set a timer and have family members scatter through the house putting away the day's mess.

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Let's get creative...

Name	Link
Raised salt painting	artfulparent.com/raised-salt-painting
Mini easter baskets	artfulparent.com/diy-mini-easter-baskets-from-a-paper-plate
Painting eggs as keepsakes	artfulparent.com/blowing-out-easter-eggs
The rainbow skittle experiment	artfulparent.com/dissolving-candy-art-rainbow-skittles-experiment
Make slime	artfulparent.com/best-butter-slime-recipe
Painting with wheels	artfulparent.com/painting-with-wheels
Splatter painting	artfulparent.com/splatter-painting-with-kids-crazy-fun-for-all-ages
13 Awesome kids gadgets and toys you can DIY	www.youtube.com/watch?v=eURwb5dzc3Y
15 Project's kids will love making	www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMgb5yCEolc
16 Drawing hacks for kids	www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSsdnC896pU
Mud prints	artfulparent.com/five-nature-based-art-ideas-for-toddlers-and-preschoolers
Nature-based art for kids	artfulparent.com/five-nature-based-art-ideas-for-toddlers-and-preschoolers
Water play for toddlers	artfulparent.com/five-nature-based-art-ideas-for-toddlers-and-preschoolers
Finger painting with sensory sand	artfulparent.com/finger-painting-fun-with-sensory-sand-finger-paint

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