



SURVIVING WORKING AT HOME WHILE KIDS LEARN AT HOME

Many families have been forced into balancing working from home and keeping kids engaged in learning. The kids may be having a hard time recognizing that school is still in session and that learning is being conducted in a different way. As parents, you have the job of managing kids' remote learning while trying to be productive on a job that is now also done remotely.

Don't panic! Your first job is to figure out how to help your kids stay focused by establishing a routine you and they can follow. A good routine can help you reduce stress and help your family work and learn successfully at home.

Create a Routine

A successful routine should include these components:

Study Time (2-4 hours). It is not realistic to plan on your kids studying for six hours as they did in a typical school day. Two to four hours a day, spread throughout the day in 30-60-minute intervals, is more realistic. Elementary school kids should study for about two hours a day, but usually can't go longer than 25 minutes at a time before they need a break. High school kids should study about four hours a day.

Quiet Time (30-60 minutes). Quiet time in your routine helps keep everyone sane. This is planned time, not free time. During this time, kids should select something they want to do, like read or write in their journal. Some families might try relaxation techniques, which fight stress, anxiety and depression. Every family should work together to determine what happens during quiet time.

Free time. This is the "no plans" time. There are no instructions to follow or tasks set by adults. The kids decide what they want to do, period. Some limits might have to be set for younger kids.



Outside time. Physical activity and fresh air are important to help manage energy and focus while keeping spirits up. Try to go outside daily to walk, run, ride bikes, play tag, etc. At least one outside break after 2 p.m. each day helps kids recharge following the after-lunch slump. Remember social distancing guidelines.

Chores time. Assign kids chores. Chores help build a sense of responsibility and cut out some of your work. If they can keep their room tidy, you don't have to.

Tips for Making the Routine Work

- Break for meals throughout the day.
- Set a wake-up time and time for getting dressed, like when they were in school. A regular bedtime is also important; sleep is the key to mental and physical health.
- Get kids to buy into the routine by letting them help create it.
- Screen time for television and online games should be reserved for the end of the day as a reward. It can be a distraction if given early or midday.
- Place the schedule your family creates where it can be seen and act as a reminder of the routine expectations.
- Limit your family's consumption of the news. It can cause stress and anxiety. It is important to keep kids informed so they feel safe, but they don't need to know everything.

Taking the time to put a routine in place will help you manage working from home while educating kids at home. The routine you build should also make you more productive as a remote worker.



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References

[How to Keep Your Kid on a Schedule During Coronavirus School Closings](#), New York Post

[Supporting Kids During the Coronavirus Crisis](#), Child Mind Institute

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