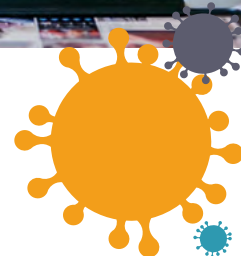




COVID-19: Returning to School

Juggling Work and Kids' Schooling



The course of the pandemic remains uncertain, making it likely that more kids will be getting their schooling at home. For parents working at home, keeping kids on track and feeling balanced requires some creative juggling.

Here are some suggestions to help bring a sense of control to this “new normal” environment.

- **Set up a household routine.** Stick to targeted times for rising, dressing, meal times, academics and activities, and post the schedule on the fridge. For young kids, post drawings depicting the activity segments. This will create a sense of predictability and order for everyone.
- **Replicate the school/daycare schedule as much as possible.** For young kids, stick to the school's or daycare's rotation of physical activity, music, art, etc. For older kids, follow the lesson plans the school provides.
- **Adjust your personal schedule.** Many parents get up before the kids to organize the day's school and activity schedule. Conversely, it can be helpful to carve out time when the kids are in bed to catch up on work emails.
- **Help kids stay organized.** You could print out your child's daily school worksheets to place on their desk, and post a note of the day's academic Zoom schedule on their computer.
- **Make a hard stop for the workday.** Try to end as early as you can in the pre-dinner hour. Take the kids outside to walk the dog, play hopscotch or hoops, or ride their bikes. Physical activity can foster better well-being for everyone and also promote better sleep!
- **Eat meals together.** Cook together, pick up dinner or, on pleasant days, go out for a picnic lunch. It's refreshing and fun. In other words, focus on activities that can maximize the time you have together.
- **Encourage your kids to stay technologically connected.** Designate a time for your kids to get together with friends via Google Hangouts, FaceTime, etc.

Keep reading for more tips. 

- **Enlist virtual help from available loved ones.** For example, can Grandma virtually read to your little one while you attend to a work project?
- **Appreciate the silver lining.** As hard as working at home in the time of the COVID-19 quarantine can be, this can be a chance to forge close bonds with your kids and observe how they tick on a daily basis.
- **Try not to look too far ahead.** Focusing on your task list for the day and tackling tasks one by one can keep worry and anxiety at bay.
- **Cut yourself some slack.** This is an unusual, trying situation and you may need to bend your standards. For example, it's ok to turn on a PBSkids show or some other video for your kids while you work on a project. Acknowledge that even if your child doesn't do 100% of what you were expecting, if they did their best, that's OK.
- **Take care of yourself.** Make time to virtually connect with your own friends as well as family. Attend a online yoga class, listen to a live stream concert or find other ways to recharge yourself!

If you or family members are feeling anxious or overwhelmed, **reach out to a licensed mental health professional for coping strategies.**

