

Tips on working from home with children

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Public Health Workplace Health Team

Introduction

Many employees have been asked to work from home to control the spread of the Coronavirus. Some of us will be doing so with children at home.

Here are a few tips to help you to work at home effectively whilst balancing the needs of your children.

Ideas to keep children entertained

Depending on the age of your children, here are a few ideas to entertain them while you work.

- Set them tasks to keep up with their schoolwork
- Find an educational TV show for them to watch
- Ask them to write a short story
- Get them to draw a picture or story board to present to you on your break
- Set them house tasks such as tidying their rooms
- Encourage them to read, play board or card games
- Set up a table with [play dough](#)
- Get the dress up box out and ask them to make up a play to perform to you after work
- Set up sand or water play
- Ask them to make up a song and dance to perform to you in a break
- Set up imaginative play with a tent or den made out of a sheet or large box
- Set up model making with glue, tape and items from the recycling bin

How can I balance the needs of my children with the demands of my job?

Please observe the Government's [social distancing requirements](#)

10 Tips on home working with children

1. **Meet your children's needs first.** They will be less likely to disturb you while you are working.
2. **Agree a daily routine but be flexible.** Having a fixed routine can feel good but does not always work if you have children. Try to adapt your schedule to accommodate their changing needs.
3. **Set boundaries but expect interruptions.** Do your most focused work in the evening when they are settled or in bed.
4. **Explain your work to your children** and if you are contacting a colleague, explain you are with your children.
5. **Set realistic expectations for yourself.** You may not be able to achieve as much in your working day. You can't do everything, so prioritise. Focus on the things you have achieved and not on your to-do list.
6. **Rotate childcare** with a partner to give you both time to work and time with the children.
7. **Keep in touch with colleagues.** Regularly video conference or talk on the phone or in group chats.
8. **Try to see the bigger picture** and relax some rules around things, such as limits on screen time. If you have completed some work tasks, you will feel happier and be able to devote some time to your children.
9. **Take regular breaks.** Check-in with your children, have lunch together, set up another activity. Try to finish work at the same time each day and plan some family activities for after work.
10. **Reward good behaviour** if your children have completed their task or stayed quiet during a call.