

# Work From Home With Survival Guide

PARENTING

ARTICLE

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## Your Survival Guide to Working from Home with a Young Child

Working from home can be challenging, even more so with the presence of young children. The constant cries of, 'Mummy, I need ...' can range from basic needs like food and toileting, to bizarre demands like needing you to bend over on the floor as a tunnel. How are you supposed to get anything done with a young one constantly demanding your attention? Fret not, we've got you covered. Here's our survival guide to working from home with kids.

### **1. Set clear expectations with your boss and colleagues**

Clearly communicate your needs with your boss and colleagues to get them to understand the challenges of working at home with young children. Explain to them that you might need to take some time off during the day to attend to the needs of your child, but you are still committed to getting your work done. Life with kids is never perfect, so expect lots of distractions, and maybe even an extra voice during your virtual meetings!

### **2. Have a schedule... but be flexible**

Having a schedule will help you prioritise and keep your work on track, but allow yourself some room to be flexible to change it up when the need arises. Set realistic expectations, as it is highly impossible to work for 4 hours straight without any distractions. Arrange for focus periods during your child's nap times or when they need you the least, and block out time for meals and clean ups. Make sure to also set time aside to fill up your child's tank throughout the day. Alternating between the needs of your child and work can also help you manage the expectations from both parties for a more seamless work from home experience.

### **3. Fill up your child's emotional tank first**

Before you begin work, spend some quality time with your child. A 10-15-minute time together can help fill up their needs, which might allow you to have a longer stretch of uninterrupted time. This will help reduce their anxiety and clinginess.<sup>1</sup> It can be something as simple as cuddling together and reading a book, or something physically demanding like a short walk to the park to get their body moving and regulating their senses. Once their emotional tank is filled, your child will be more content and less attention seeking, and you will then be able to focus on other things like work.

### **4. Create a workspace that includes your kids**

Young children love being close by, even if they don't need you at that very moment. Creating a space for them to play independently nearby while you work will help reduce their separation anxiety, and might even help them feel more secure. Set a shelf with tools that encourages focus, so that they will be engaged in an activity without bothering you. It also helps to have a variety of activities they can do by themselves without needing your assistance so they can go from one activity to another. Remember, a young child will not have the ability to spend much time on a single activity as they have a shorter attention span. A general rule of thumb is 4 minutes of attention per year of life, so for a two-year-old, their attention span is likely to be in the range of 5 to 10 minutes only.

### **5. Ask for help if you need**

While we try our best to do it on our own, sometimes it's best to get help if possible. If you have an important meeting or a demanding task, it is better to get help from someone such as your spouse or a friend or family member to watch the kids for a little while so you can focus. There are also nanny services that provide on demand babysitters in your home should you need to hire one for times such as this.

## **6. Don't be too hard on yourself**

Most importantly, give yourself some grace and know that juggling motherhood and work at the same time is a real struggle. It is not only physically demanding, but mentally as well. There will be days when everything just goes according to plan, and days when you're ready to throw in the towel. For days like that, remember to take some time off for some self-care to allow yourself to recharge so you can take on the challenge once again.

### **Reference:**

1. <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-care/managing-child-separation-anxiety>

*This article was written by Motherhood.com.my.*

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