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Top Tips on How to Work at Home with your Children

If you have small children then the idea of working from home seems really logical. You can be there for them as they grow up, do the school run and be there for home-work and play time.

However, there are a few things to think about before you begin:

- Have you discussed your plans with your partner if you have one?
- If you are a lone parent have you fully considered all the implications?
- Have you thought exactly how many hours you will be able to work?
- What provision will you make for school holidays?
- What about other child-care arrangements?
- Have you got a support team in place?

Some other things:

- How flexible are you with your routine?
- Are you able to remain calm in difficult situations?
- Are your core skills suited to working from home?
- How focused on your career are you?
- You have a really important meeting scheduled but your child wants you there for sports day – how will you cope?

Pre-school age:

Generally this age can be very unpredictable, with irregular sleep patterns, childhood illness and possible sleepless nights also for you. Any work would totally rely on child-care and a full back-up support system. This is a great time however, to break yourself back into work and start putting a routine in place for the future.

You can ease yourself in with just a day or two or a couple of mornings and see how you go. You are then around for a lot of those special moments which you might miss out on by working full-time in an office or other place of work.

School age:

Once your children become of school age, suddenly you have a set number of hours when they are not at home and you can put some more structure into your life. Just remember the holidays, where you may need to get child-care or do swaps.

As they get older, depending on your business, you might involve them a little bit too – perhaps they can fill envelopes with any mailings, sort, count, or any number of small tasks. Remember if you are working from home this will fascinate them, so involve them rather than using the old saying – ‘go away mummy/daddy is working’.

At this stage you can be working up to full-time and making good use of swapping with other working parents, or after school clubs etc. Aim to be flexible and enjoy spending time with home-work or cooking together and having quality family time. You can always make up with admin in the evening when they are in bed.

So the main key here is organization; if you plan well ahead and adopt a cool calm and positive outlook you will always remain focused and enjoying working from home.

Teenagers:

This age can bring a whole set of different issues as they have their own routines which may not fit in with yours and they could be at home a lot when you are working. You may decide it's time to expand and if you haven't already have an office built in your garden, convert the garage or go up into the attic.

If you have been working at home for some time they already know what you do, but do they understand why and how you do it? Have an open discussion where you discuss your needs, their needs and come to a positive solution. Teenagers have a tendency to live in their own world, so don't aim to involve them here, the important thing is to have the communication channels open!

Best of all, remember that although your children or teenagers may not show an interest in what you are doing, deep down there can be great respect and pride over what you are doing – after all you are their role model in life!

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