



Work-from-home burnout: How to manage super human responsibilities

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, you thought you were an ace at-home multitasker as spouse, parent, employee, launderer, housecleaner and cook. The list goes on and on. However, it wasn't until the pandemic hit that you had to perform many of these tasks simultaneously, while adding teacher and other responsibilities to the already long list of expectations. As cases spike around the country and many communities announce modified learning approaches, the new normal isn't over yet. However, there are steps you can take to help manage parent/work-from-home burnout.

1. Recognize that you are working multiple jobs in ways that you haven't before. Accept that not everything can be a priority.
2. Remember that other parents/colleagues are in the same situation. Barking dogs and shouting children have become the norm on Zoom meetings.
3. Every weekend, make a plan for the upcoming week that includes your work and household tasks as well as your children's school and non-school activities. Use a planner or wall calendar that everyone in the house can see.

4. Within that schedule, allow for flexibility and allow your children to have some role in the planning to help them feel more involved in the process. For older children, have set check-in times to make sure they're on track but let them work independently. For younger children, such as toddlers, give them an activity near your space, much like the parallel play they do with their peers.
5. In terms of the school day, quality over quantity matters. Plan for other activities and try to make sure some of them don't involve a screen.

'Me time' is important too

Getting out ahead of your and your children's schedules is a first step, but you need to take care of yourself as well. Consider the following to help you help yourself.

1. It can be hard to establish a work/life balance when work seems constantly there in the home office. Set a time to be off from work and adhere to it. Drape a cloth over your computer or store your laptop in a drawer to signal that work is done for the day.
2. Consider volunteering in the community, which can be good for the kids as well.
3. While the ability to travel may be limited, still try to use some vacation time, even if it is just a day or two, to recharge.
4. Arrange a support group/virtual meet-up with other parents as a way to share ideas on what has worked and what hasn't.
5. Be creative and take a non-traditional approach. There is no rulebook for these times so do what works best for you and your family.