

## Balancing remote working and learning

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As a working parent, have you ever wished you had the flexibility to stay home with your kids? If your answer is yes, I'd love to hear from you now that we're in the middle of a pandemic.

I'm a planner by nature. I keep things organized and on track. This was a challenge in which not even the best planners could feel prepared. I shifted from getting my kids up and out the door, heading into the office, coming home, cooking dinner and running the kids to their activities to suddenly working home full-time with kids 24-hours a day.

I entered this situation with an open mind. Being an introvert, I thought I had this in the bag. I thought it'd be so refreshing from my typical on-the-go routine. My family would have so much fun being together 24/7, making memories, doing puzzles, playing board games, cooking and bonding.

As the weeks carried on, the reality of our new norm crept in. We were having fun, living in the moment and not getting caught up in what happened outside our house. Then, the reality of working from home and homeschooling smashed in like a wrecking ball.

With three kids and a dog in the house, I quickly realized my open office space off my living room didn't give me the privacy and quiet I needed to get work done. I sent my spouse to the store to pick up a desk and created my new workspace in our bedroom, with a door I can shut to drown out the noise.

I also realized that remote learning is not a one-size-fits-all for students. My high school senior easily adapted to the online learning process, especially with her upcoming graduation motivating her to stay on track. My sixth grader liked her Zoom lessons but wasn't always paying attention during the one-hour instruction, which caused stressful evenings trying to get assignments completed. My fourth grader got his work done early in the morning, so he could have his outdoor P.E. time and still have time for electronics. But I needed to check every assignment and Zoom login.

I always value a great teacher. And my kids have had some of the best teachers around — patient, kind, motivating, challenging. I thought my kids would embrace and easily adapt to moving to a remote learning environment. But there was no rule book on how to move from years of in-person learning to a remote learning environment so abruptly. Parents who were adapting to working from home had to balance being a productive worker, a teacher and a parent. And those are the fortunate ones who had the flexibility to work from home.

As we approach the 2020-2021 school year, schools are opening with different learning plans. Whether in-person, partial remote or fully remote learning, we need to continue to be adaptable as this situation continues through the rest of 2020 and into 2021. Whatever your school situation looks like, we've put together this resource to help navigate the challenges that come with balancing work, school and home in this new environment.

**Resources:**

- [Back to school planning in uncertain times](#)
- [Homeschooling resources guide](#)
- [Tips for homeschooling](#)
- [Balancing work, family, and caregiving responsibilities](#)

**Top five things I've learned as a work from home and homeschooling parent:**

1. My younger kids need a lesson in basic foundational computer skills, including logging into a Zoom class, checking email and completing assignments on a computer.
2. I immensely appreciate teachers. They teach 20-30 kids daily in a tiny classroom. I struggled to teach two children in a house and make sure they joined their daily Zoom lessons.
3. My house is in a constant state of disaster and my grocery bill is up. I'm also an efficient short-order cook, serving up three meals a day.
4. I need time to unwind after work. Whether it's watching a show, taking a walk around the block, or just being in a room alone, I need that time to recharge.
5. Don't sweat the small stuff. Missed Zoom call? Burnt pizza? Milk spilled on the laptop? Everyone is dealing with similar situations, so don't be hard on yourself. Clean up the milk and restart the day.