



10 tips how to survive working from home and homeschooling

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After a month spent at home and with the prospect of more weeks to come, there is no time to be a hero; we need to seek new ways and share survival guides. The combination of working from home (by both parents) and homeschooling has already moved from a wish list to the list of worst nightmares. I realize that mine is a purely subjective point of view of a father of two children attending primary school. Nevertheless, in all humility, I would like to share 10 tips I have tried so that we all survive in good health. Please note that this does not prejudice whether or not I have been successful or whether these tips will work for you.

■ Create a routine

Kids, as well as parents working from home, need to maintain the rhythm of school days and weekends. Teachers have quickly learned to use Teams, Bakalari app or emails and flood kids with homework. In addition, kids receive home assignments from art schools or sports clubs. If the kids are to make it, try to keep the weekly routine and wake up your kids in the morning from Monday to Friday - the same as when they go to school. Older children should be able to manage the studies on their own, but you will have to spend time with the younger ones. Try to do at least part of the tasks with your children in the morning. If that is not possible, at least appreciate the fact that kids can work with Teams better than you do.

■ Work rhythm

Children may find it difficult to understand why their parents don't give them full attention once they are at home. Try to help them visually distinguish between time to play and time to work. You can use e.g. color signals as those of traffic lights. E.g. red color means that you are having a video call and the kids are not allowed to enter your room; orange color means that you are working, but entry is possible. Green color means an invitation to enter. Even so, be prepared that if your little one wants to share with you the fact that they have just lost their tooth, the red traffic light on the door will not stop them anyway.

■ Breaks

You must take breaks to prevent your children from frequently disturbing your rhythm of work. Keep in mind that your break does not necessarily mean a quiet time, coffee and newspapers. You can choose though whether you will spend your break learning with your children or playing with them. In any case, it gives you a chance to relax while doing something different than work. If not, try playing the Sleeping Beauty.

■ Games

Take your childhood games out of your archive or basement and, whatever they are (Mastermind, Monopoly, or other board games...), play them with your kids. This will allow you to fill your breaks, be carried back to the old days with nostalgia, or cut the time your children spend in front of mobile and computer screens. Or, alternatively, remember the times when you attended pioneer or scout camps and prepare for the kids a kind of point-scoring scavenger hunt. "Gamification" is, after all, one of the popular trends in education today.

■ Take advantage of the things you have learned at work

Are you a project manager, do you enjoy agile management, are you passionate about negotiating or are you preparing for an important business presentation? Try using at home all the skills most valued by your employer. Set up morning stand-up meetings for children, create a weekly schedule for the whole family using a waterfall chart, prepare your BATNA when explaining to your partner why you have to work right now. Repetition is the key to mastery and using your job skills on the home battlefield is extremely difficult.

■ Food

I realized that many children play Greedy Guts. "Eating mom and eating dad" is the next step after emptying the fridge. Let the kids plan the menu for the whole week to get an idea how much food they will need to buy and how much it will cost. Alternatively, have them search online for your favorite nearby restaurants engaged in the "Save Your Pub" program and have them order takeaway food. This will save cooking time while also supporting the local economy.

■ Being together

Although it might seem crazy after spending a month locked up in your apartment, try it. Find an activity which you can do together as a family and which you can all enjoy. Plan e.g. a home movie night. Choose a film that is suitable for everyone, ideally a relaxing comedy. Buy drinks, crisps, make popcorn and get on the couch in front of the screen. You may find it has helped you forget about the tense situations you had to deal with during the day.

■ Being alone

Every member of the household has the right to be alone at least for a short time during the day. Discuss who will be alone, when and how. And keep their peace and privacy. If you have more children, try to spend at least a short alone time with each of them every day. If you have seven children, change the rhythm and have one-on-one time with each child at least once a week. Try meditation and mindfulness. If you don't know how, let me know.

■ Plan what you will do when this is over

There is always hope. You had to cancel Easter holiday event with friends. You canceled the trips scheduled for both May holidays. The idea of summer holiday at the seaside is fading away while you negotiate cancellation of your reservation with the travel agency. Never mind. Plan what you will do when the current restrictions are over. Be creative, write down your ideas and start implementing them when things actually get better.

■ You don't always have to win

Once again: you don't always have to win. Always being right gives you a nice sense of self-worth; sometimes, however, having a good relationship with your partner and your children is more important than being right at any cost. Things do not always work out the way you want them, at least not straightaway, but don't give up. Be kind and patient to yourself and to those around you. The current situation is difficult and it's OK to have a "pyjama day" once in a while and stay in bed all day; nobody gets hurt (unless you accidentally switch on a video during a teleconference).



Ivo Novotný
Senior Manager
People Advisory Services

ivo.novotny@cz.ey.com
+420 731 627 095