

Media Coverage

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Outlook India	13 Aug 2021	Online	https://www.outlookindia.com/outlookmoney/opinions-and-blogs/the-diary-of-a-working-parent-the-pandemic-edition-8376	The Diary of a Working Parent: The Pandemic Edition



The pandemic, for many of us, has single-handedly been the most significant experience in our lives, and has triggered a sea of changes. It has bought in a paradigm shift in our lives both personally and professionally, compelling us to transition working on platforms virtually.

In the last year, most of our work, whether it has been office meetings, conferences, auditing, client meetings, interviews or review meets, has all been taking place virtually. It has given birth to a 'new normal'. A term that has been widely used by individuals to describe these pandemic-induced changes in their lives, which some individuals have seamlessly adopted, while some others hope to have adopted them on a temporary basis, eagerly waiting for things to revert to pre-pandemic times.

As workspace and platforms have changed, so have the responsibilities of a professional individual who has to integrate his or her job responsibilities and work with diligence. For working parents, the list of responsibilities is a lot more extensive, who are now also tasked with looking after their children and accomplishing company directives side by side.

As the world has come to a standstill with everyone stationed at home. Working parents are now expected to continue working from home and also look after their children at the same time, which has been a hands-on task for a lot of parents. They are now multitasking: managing their work commitments, household chores and taking care of their kids all simultaneously.

Considering that kids also attend school on a virtual platform, they often require their parents' assistance in navigating the medium and other school activities. Parents are now also sharing the load with schoolteachers and are now obligated to supervise their kids when in class. In the absence of a physical teacher, they have to ensure that the

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kid completes their class work, home assignment, school projects and submits it to the teacher on time. With outdoor visits and playing also being restricted, younger kids mostly tend to turn to their parents to be entertained, which may happen to clash with their busy work schedules.

Initially, many parents struggled with finding their footing and their balance in this newly introduced environment. Quite a few have found it overwhelming, managing these exhaustive lists of duties and doing justice to them. However, with time passing, some individuals have found their balance in juggling work and making time for their kids.

Some organised steps can ease the work and help in balancing the same.

Scheduling and Routine

The key to effective management lies in scheduling. Parents must work out a comprehensive schedule and must stick to it. The schedule must have the entire day planned out with time allotted for the different tasks for both parent and children. With working from home, many times employees end up working past their designated work hours. However, one must make time for their children throughout the day.

Ensure that all your deadlines and work commitments are timely adhered to. Periodically take short breaks in between to keep an eye child and interact with them. Try fitting in small activities that you can play with the kids. This will not only help you spend time with your kids but would also give you a power break from work. It can be a great exercise for your kids and can help you bond with them.

Divide Household Chores

Dividing household chores with all family members, including kids, will give them a sense of responsibility. This will give them a task and an activity to look forward to and will also help them understand the importance of sharing responsibilities. The child, based on their age, can be tasked to lend their hands in doing the chores. It may be as simple as folding clothes or wiping down surfaces. This way they are also treated equally and have something fruitful to do in their free time.

Designated Workspaces

With work transitioned virtually and everyone stationed at home, it is important that boundaries are drawn, and everyone has a designated workspace. Whether it is your spouse working or kids attending school, make sure that each individual in the family has their own space to work or attend school from. This space should allow them to work peacefully, and members should not disturb them while they are working, which should be applicable to both parents and children.

Drawing these invisible boundaries is essential for all while working from home. This way parents can work efficiently without kids disturbing them. Similarly, kids can also attend classes without parents' interference. Although, they should be allowed to ask for assistance if they require it.

The past year has been full of surprises and challenges thrown our way. We have had to adapt to changing environments and don new responsibilities, but it has also given us the opportunity to stay closer to our family and spend more time with them. It has also been a learning experience for many where we have either learnt a new skill or technology. Even grandparents are now adopting technology and becoming 'tech-savvy' with their grandchildren's assistance. They are getting hands-on help in exploring the simple marvels and surprises of a Zoom meeting, a WhatsApp call, a Skype family meet up, and so on and so forth. So, even though times have been testing, people have managed to find a ray of light, and are progressing forward.

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