

Today, GC Research Associate Kristen Schenkel takes a turn at Coach's Corner.



*Hi Kristen,
Some of our clients are now working at home with children present and reporting high stress levels. I'm not a parent, so I pass this question on to you, a mom who's working two jobs and faring well despite frustrations.
What do you say to our readers?*

Thanks, Michelle

Although my children have a loving and safe home, creating an environment conducive to learning and working from home has not been easy. After the first couple weeks, I realized how difficult it was to concentrate on my work and help them get school work done. We had no structure. By the end of the day, we were all frustrated.

We needed a plan to repeat each day so everyone knew what to expect. I wrote out schedules and taped them to the fridge. Now we wake up at the same time every day, have breakfast together, follow shower times, and enjoy free time. During breakfast, I run through my schedule for the day, letting them know if I have meetings that require quiet. We have ground rules to ensure that I can focus. I remind them again five minutes before my meetings start.

We reserve 11 AM for exercise and 11:30 for art. Lunch at noon, then their free time until 1 PM. Starting at 1 PM, everyone is e-learning, reading, writing spelling words, getting exercise, then more free time. Sitting them all down at the same time to do e-learning did not work. Rotation allowed them to ask me for help without being interrupted by another kid needing help. Free time in the afternoon is sometimes together, and sometimes apart. This allows each of them alone time, which has led to less arguments. We all enjoy life more since implementing a schedule and clear communication.

How could we be expected to handle these changes without some bumps in the road? Take it day by day. Be willing to adapt and try new things to find what works for you. Choosing to make the best of this situation might help you be more productive.

Allow yourself breaks throughout the day to spend time with your kids, and don't feel guilty looking away from the work for a while. Go easy on yourself - you're performing two full-time jobs. It's human to be less productive during a crisis. Communicate honestly with your co-workers and boss. Build trust by sharing your experiences and asking about theirs. Give others the opportunity to empathize. At GC, we use a Team Check-in exercise to quickly note how everyone is doing (red/yellow/or green, and why?) as a kick-off to meetings and find it helps us be present with one another. Used correctly, it creates psychological safety and builds trust and respect. This exercise can be useful with children, too, and can be fun. If you'd like to receive our one-page exercise, shoot me an email at kristen@gladieuxconsulting.com.

As the school year ends, many of us are still working from home with kids present. We'll have to go back to the drawing board to replace e-learning with other activities. I have daily walks, continued spelling words, and brief research assignments in mind. I might even ask them to write weekly skits, since I found step-by-step guidelines on the internet.

This is an opportunity to grow as a family. Talk to your kids about what you want to try, see if they have ideas, and ask for feedback every couple of days. Whatever you decide to do, stay open-minded and be willing to adjust.

Are you dealing with a communication challenge?

If you've got a question, write to Michelle@GladieuxConsulting.com for consideration.

Questions remain confidential and anonymous.

COACH'S CORNER

