
3 Tips to Be (Somewhat) Productive Working From Home with a Toddler

As a mom of two boys – a 2-month-old and a 2.5-year-old – the lifestyle changes required to maintain social distancing for COVID-19 had me wondering how parents would adjust. How can we be successful working from home when daycares and schools are also closed?

While I'm definitely *not* an expert, I *have* been on maternity leave for the past two months, and I've spent a lot more time than usual at home with my kids. So here are some of my tried-and-true tips for balancing this juggling act, given what I know now!

1. Schedule downtime

Toddlers thrive on routine: if they know what's expected of them, your life becomes a lot easier. With kids who are used to having a structured weekday routine at daycare, being home all day will be an adjustment. Expect some bumps in the road. I've actually started writing down our routine, which helps us maintain consistency. Schedule downtime in your routine through naps and child-led activities, and leverage screen time when necessary.

- **Naps.** If your toddler still naps, great – use that time to jump on a call or catch up on email. If your child has started thinking naps are optional (like mine), keep scheduling quiet time in their room. Set the expectation that they don't need to sleep, but they have to stay in their room. This helps promote individual play and gives you a break to start that PowerPoint you promised your boss.
- **Activities.** Another way you can get some downtime as a parent is to set up activities that encourage individual play. [Busy Toddler](#) and [Days with Grey](#) are great resources for ideas that require very little supplies. Set up an activity in the morning so you can get an hour or so to catch up on email. Chances are, your toddler will still need some assistance – so it's best not schedule calls or meetings during this time. As I write this blog post, I'm sitting on the floor of my bathroom while my son plays with [bath paint](#). I'll probably get a good hour out of this!
- **Screen time.** Lastly, you may need to loosen up those rules around screen time and turn on Paw Patrol when necessary. If you know you can get 30 minutes of un-interrupted time with a show, use when absolutely necessary. You always have that option in your back pocket for a last minute call or meeting.

2. Communicate and prioritize

Let your team know when the best time to schedule calls to accommodate your schedule will be. Maybe it's during nap time, or first thing in the morning when your toddler is watching Daniel Tiger. If your co-workers have kids as well, try to find times you all can carve out that make sense to hold a team meeting or catch up call. Jump on video when possible, but be flexible for those trying to juggle kids – we might not be ready for our closeup. Make sure you have a clear agenda and keep meetings as productive as possible. Know that co-workers will have limited time to meet and leverage asynchronous communication, like a Slack or an email as well.

Be realistic and know that you won't be functioning at 110% productivity. Aggressively prioritize both what needs to get done at home and what needs to get done at work. For example, my child needs to expend some energy at the park, *and* I need to get that presentation done for Friday. Both are non-negotiable. The laundry, however, can wait another day.

3. Come up with a game-plan for help

Is your spouse also home? Schedule out one or two hour increments so each of you can get time to get some work done. Use your routine to make it clear who is responsible for the kids at which time.

If you have family nearby, opt for a parent or sibling to stop by for a couple hours a day to take your kids outside or play in the family room while you hop on calls. Many colleges have sent students home, so if you're comfortable having someone come to your house, check on your neighborhood Facebook group to see if any students are looking for part-time work. Even if you hire them for a few hours a day, it'll allow you some un-interrupted time to be productive.

At LogMeIn, we're here to help!

The big takeaway with this unprecedented move to remote work is that the lines between work and life are about to become even more blurred. Be patient and remind yourself (and others!) that we're all going to need some time to figure out what that means for our families.