

# Recommendations to families on how to combine working from home with caring for young children



One of the current measures to stop the spread of **COVID-19** is to stay home. For many people this has meant continuing their work remotely. In some cases, this has meant moving their businesses or enterprises into their home.

Since working from home has become necessary due to the unexpected health crisis of the **COVID-19** pandemic, there was no previous planning. Therefore, in this new scenario, families often have had to suddenly organize the household in order to be able to reconcile work and family.

Additionally, many children are not attending nursery, kindergarten, or

elementary schools, and, consequently, families are responsible for assisting them with their educational activities.

Unexpectedly, the house has become simultaneously a home, an office, and a school for millions of families in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in much of the world.

Here are **seven recommendations** that can help you during this time while working from home.



# 1



**It is important to adjust expectations of what can be done in this situation.**

This means carefully reviewing the different responsibilities and chores of yourself and your children and creating a realistic plan of what can be done. This plan should take into account your well-being and that of the children. You will surely not be able to do everything nor do it how you would like it to be, but that is fine; this is an exceptional situation.



**Keep in mind that you are combining remote working or working from home with:**



**Assisting your children with their education.**



**Taking care of your family's health.**



**Doing housework.**



**Ensuring the supply of food and groceries.**



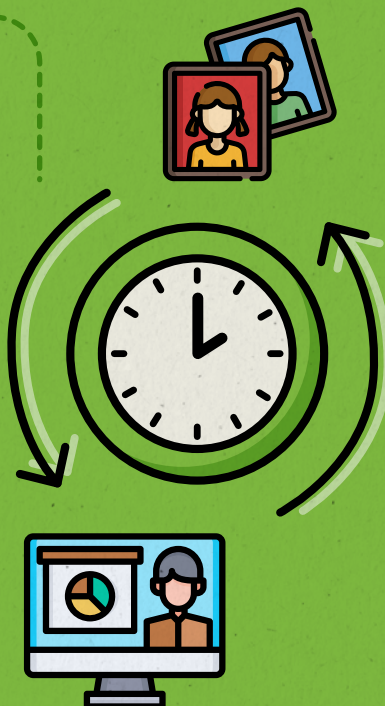
**Caring for and raising your children.**



**Not knowing what will happen next.**

**Carrying out other responsibilities.**

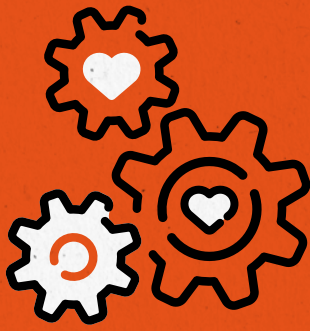
# 2



**Realistically organize the time you can spend on your children and your work.**

It is important to dedicate available time to your children as well as to your work. Time must be organized throughout the day. When there are young children in the home, they will need you throughout the day. You will likely not be able to dedicate as much time to your work as normal since you will need to include breaks to take care of the children. If there are other adults in the home, you can take turns working and providing care. At first, this may be more difficult, but over time, the children will also adjust to this new system.

# 3



**Be available to meet the needs of your children.**



If your child interrupts you for any reason while you are working, we suggest that you address their concerns first and then calmly and clearly explain to them that you must return to your work. It is important that children feel secure and know that there is an adult present in case they need anything. This calms the child and helps you work without stress.

*Another useful tip is to begin the day by devoting time exclusively to your children. In this way, they will start the day feeling more secure in the presence of an adult, likely keeping them calm for the rest of the day.*



# 4

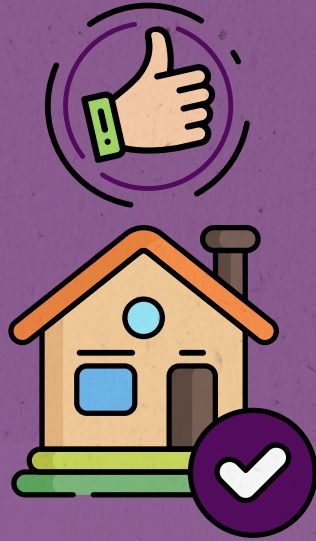


**Share chores and responsibilities equally among the adults in the home.**



Sharing household chores and childcare equally will make it easier to organize the time dedicated to work. Preparing meals, bathing the children, and cleaning, among others, are chores that all adults can do. It is important to share these responsibilities equally. This situation is an opportunity to involve the men more in the housework and childcare.

# 5



## Agree on how to live together and on establishing routines.

It is important to include the necessary time for the adults themselves, but also the time to dedicate to the children and play. Children need to feel secure, that an adult will always be there to respond to them and help fill their needs. When children feel secure, they will likely become more autonomous, playing more independently (age dependent).

## Do not be over-demanding with yourself or your children.

We are in an unusual situation, coping as best as possible. This is a time to be flexible; to observe what your children need, and to adjust routines and schedules accordingly. Some days will feel like a failure and some will feel like a success. This is a situation where each day has its own learning and challenges.



## Organize a flexible work plan in terms of time, and be realistic according to the situation.

If possible, try to reach an agreement with your employer. Ideally, agree on realistic goals to meet work commitments; this will likely reduce stress. Flexible hours can be arranged from home. Be sure to take into consideration that work will be interrupted by children and household chores. You can set aside some time during the day when you are more available for work and other times when you are busy with children and home responsibilities.

# 7





## Recommendations on what to say to your employer or supervisor

- Before speaking with your employer/supervisor, we suggest that you review the company's human resource policies to be clear about the processes or protocols that are being implemented in the context of COVID-19.
- Prepare and write down the topics you want to talk about. Identify the ones that seem most important to you in order to combine work with housework and parenting. (For example, flexibility of your schedule or weekly goals to meet, and any issues you need to review with your employer.)
- Prepare proposals on how to organize work in this context, and keep an open mind about what your employer may propose. Be prepared with some solutions. For example, propose alternative solutions in the case where the time for follow-up calls coincide with the time that you dedicate to prepare the food, you could propose alternative timetables.
- It is important for your employer to clearly understand your situation. Explain how you are organizing your household, the various chores you must juggle, and the challenges you have. Also, take advantage of pointing out that you are still committed to doing your job as best as possible.
- You can take advantage of these discussions to review work-performance indicators and agree on adjustments appropriate to the current situation.
- If you work in a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) or a small business where you have a more direct relationship with your employer, it is likely that the remote work protocols have greater flexibility, enabling you to propose suggestions.



You can find more information and tips on our [website](#) to support you during this period, and you can also see [specific parenting recommendations](#) while you are at home due to the pandemic.

We also invite you to participate in the [#AprendoEnCasa](#) challenges, where we propose a set of fun activities that can be done with young children to encourage learning through play.

UNICEF is strongly calling on companies to implement policies that support families in the context of COVID-19.

[More information is available here.](#)

