



6 Essential Tips for Working Mothers

By Kelly Nault, M.A.

"A mother's work is never done" (sigh). Just when you think you're through, you find you've only just begun. You aren't the only one!

If the pressure of balancing your work and parenting is ultimately leading you to give both your work and family less, it is time to find a new parenting strategy and quick! When a work from home mom decides to set clear boundaries and manage her time effectively she can dramatically reduce parenting stress and boost her parenting joy. So let's get started.

Six Essential Work Life Survival Parenting Tips for the Work at Home Mom (WAHM)

Your happiness as a work at home mom (WAHM) depends on your commitment to following these six parenting time management tips:

1. **Ban your open door policy.** Set your work hours and stick with them. Unless your job requires you to answer the phone, answer it only on your schedule. A work at home mom (WAHM) has no time for distractions (especially from your kids and spouse—likely your biggest distractions). This only leads to low productivity. Make certain every member of your household knows the times of day when you are and are not available for interruptions and stick with this schedule.
2. **Involve your family in what you do.** Talk about what you do, ask your family to help solve work problems (children often find very creative solutions), and let them help you with small jobs like licking envelopes. One work at home mom I know asked her nine year old daughter to answer the business telephone when the receptionist called in sick, on one of their biggest sales days. This boosted her daughter's self-esteem and also helped her appreciate how her mother's work put a roof over her head, food in her mouth and clothes on her back.
3. **Consciously make the transition from work to home.** When it is family time, focus on the family. Make certain you have cleared the work cobwebs from your head. Write down your to-do list for the next day and ask yourself before you leave your desk, "How can I make my time with my family special?" Then smile and give them a hug when you see them. Too tired? Take a 20 minute cat nap, a quick walk, meditate for a short while or say a little prayer to let go of your day, so you can be all they deserve you to be.
4. **Remember it's about quality time, not quantity time.** When you are with your family, be with your family. Leave work behind so you can focus on them. "Light up" as soon as

they come into the room and find fun ways to do mealtimes, and even clean-up times together. Half an hour of positive can prevent dozens of hours of misbehavior.

5. **Solve misbehavior time-wasters.** As a family counselor, I regularly hear variations on the complaint, "My kids are driving me crazy, but I'm too crazy to find time to learn how to stop them from driving me crazy." There are simple ways to motivate your children to want to be well behaved. Invest the time now, so you don't spend more time and frustration later on (which of course takes away from time you can devote to your work).
6. **Schedule your self-care time.** The most critical key to your WAHM success is to nurture some of your needs so you can continually renew your passion for parenting. You need time to replenish your energy so you can be more efficient, productive and happy. With so much on your plate it is essential that you schedule a minimum of 20 minutes a day for you. Before or after the kids are in bed is generally the easiest to stick with.

By the way, if putting your self-care needs first makes you feel guilty and selfish, then don't do it for you—do it for your family. It is time that your self-care became a necessity, not a luxury so you can give more to all you do—at both work and home. Remember that if you are emotionally and physically healthy, you will be able to give more quality time to your family.

The six parenting time-management tips above will allow even the busiest work at home mom to finally have her cake and eat it too. By successfully balancing work and family, you will model for your children a fulfilled and healthy woman and your family will no longer have to deal with a "burnout-mom" but a happy one!

Kelly Nault-Matzen, MA, family counselor, corporate parenting spokesperson and award winning parenting author of *When You're About To Go Off The Deep End, Don't Take Your Kids With You* shares time-tested tools that motivate children to want to be well behaved, responsible and happy! To gain access to more parenting tools and to access your free online parenting course visit www.ultimateparenting.com

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