



## Wellbeing during the Coronavirus pandemic

### Childcare/home schooling

#### **General**

- Remember that you are trying to do something out of the ordinary, working in constrained circumstances and without the usual childcare or education. Try to have realistic expectations – for your work, for your child/ren’s education, and for your personal resilience. This is particularly so if someone in the household is ill.
- Be straightforward and realistic with solicitors and lay clients about your situation.
- Know yourself and your child/ren. What is important to you and their wellbeing? For example, does it help you or your child/ren to have some time outside at the beginning of the day?
- Communicate clearly – with the other adult(s) in your home, and (in an age-appropriate way) with your children. This includes communicating about the general framework and communicating on a day-to-day level (for example, some days you might be under particular pressure).
- Eat at least one meal with the whole family together, and more if you can manage it. (See also the article about eating well.)

#### **Working from home**

- If possible, set up a dedicated space for work.
- If you have a partner at home, work out how you are going to share the childcare responsibilities. Some people recommend setting blocks of time – for example, allocating shifts during the day, or rotating days (one day barrister, the next day parent). However, your practice may require you to be available at short notice for urgent tasks, and you should discuss options for flexibility between yourselves.
- Discuss with your partner when it is appropriate to interrupt each other.
- Once you have agreed your framework, both parents then need to reinforce when the other is available or unavailable.
- Bear in mind what your child/ren is/are used to when you and they are both at home – in particular, if you do not usually work from home, or if you work from home only while your children are out at school, it can be confusing for them to have you working at home. Have clear and relaxed conversations with them, regularly. It can help to have markers that the child/ren can understand – for example, a closed door, or a STOP sign you can put on the door if you are on an important call.

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- Schedule breaks around the child/ren's rhythm.

### **Home education**

- The most important thing is that your child/ren feel(s) safe and at peace. They are processing emotions and uncertainty too, so their behaviour may deteriorate, and they will likely need more reassurance than usual.
- Remember that you are home educating in an unusual situation – in most cases, home educators have set up the family's life to facilitate it, they have had time to plan, and they have access to friends, outings and places to visit.
- It can be very helpful to have a rhythm to your day, so that everyone knows what to expect.
- Be realistic about what education you as a parent can and should be providing. Particularly for younger children, reflect on whether they need to be keeping up with school work, or can take this opportunity to learn through play and self-directed projects.
- Be realistic about your child/ren's attention span.
- The school day is padded with administration, crowd control and moving between spaces, so you do not necessarily need to fill a school day's worth of time with learning.
- Take some time in the evening to plan what the child/ren will be doing the next day.
- If possible, ensure your child/ren has/have their own work space (even if this is set up on the kitchen table).
- Help your child/ren to keep in touch with friends – some people have had success with a WhatsApp group of parents to share news and activities, or with group video calls.

### Some useful links

- <https://www.annafreud.org/media/11246/option-3-covid-advice-families2.pdf>
- <https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/coronavirus-and-mental-health/>
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/>
- <https://www.themix.org.uk/get-support>
- Numbertime for 5-7 years - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01wrmhd>
- Brainpop - <https://www.brainpop.com/>
- Tynker – learn coding 5+ - <https://www.tynker.com/>
- Creative Bug - <https://www.creativebug.com/>