



# **10 Steps to Successfully Work from Home and Homeschool Your Special Needs Child**

**[autismadhdconnection.com](http://autismadhdconnection.com)**

# 10 Steps to Successfully Work from Home and Homeschool Your Special Needs Child

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, parents and caregivers are re-thinking the structure of their lives. Many have been working from home (if they were fortunate enough to keep their jobs) and managing their children full time – both in general and through e-Learning or remote school at the end of the last school year.

As the new school year approaches, safety is top of mind for their children and them. With many schools planning to re-open in person this school year, parents are struggling with how their children will remain safe. Therefore, more are looking at online school options or considering homeschool for their kids. Parents with kids who have special needs – especially those with autism and ADHD – know that homeschooling their children can be a real challenge – especially if the parent also is [working from home](#).

If you find yourself in that position, then these 10 steps can help you successfully work from home and homeschool your special needs child.

## Various definitions of “homeschool”

First, what do we mean by “homeschool”? There are several types of homeschooling that have been referenced in the media, so let’s define the different options.

**Traditional homeschool** means parents use curriculum and teach their children themselves. They follow the laws and requirements for homeschooling in their state and submit the required paperwork each school year.

**Online schools** are those schools that teach students almost entirely through distance learning. It’s a full school day online with teachers who are delivering lessons through an online platform. The school follows the state’s education requirements and provides the same reporting required to the state that other school systems must follow. A local online school may offer limited in-person sessions for students.

**Virtual or remote school options** are from local school systems that are for students who prefer to participate in school remotely through an online platform. More schools are making this available as a result of the pandemic. It could include students participating in their normal classes through Zoom, Google Hangout or other software. They generally have the same assignments and projects as their classmates who are attending school in person.

In addition, all parents should be prepared for periods of e-Learning this school year if their children are attending school again in person, but the school has to close due to a COVID-19 infection outbreak.

## 10 Steps to Success

### **Step 1: If you are new to homeschooling, research the laws, requirements and resources for homeschool in your state**

If you plan to homeschool your child with autism/ADHD yourself (instead of having them participate in a virtual option from your school system or place them in an online school), become familiar with your [state's laws and requirements](#) for homeschooling. You also should research several [curriculum options for special education homeschool](#). If your child is high functioning and usually included in mainstream classrooms at school, then general homeschool curriculum should work for them.

Whichever style and curriculum for homeschooling you decide to use, be sure it's a good fit with your family and the time you want to put into homeschooling. For instance, curriculum that provides all the prep work, etc. may be better suited for you and your child since you are working from home as well.

### **Step 2: Discuss your plan for full-time working from home and homeschooling with your employer**

Unless you are self-employed, talking to your manager at your company is a must. You may already be working from home for your job and plan to continue to do so, but it will be important for your employer to understand that you will now also be homeschooling your child. Present a plan of how you will ensure that you are achieving your work objectives and putting in your required hours while homeschooling your child. Being open with your employer can help them be more flexible when needed. If you are a good worker and have high performance, your manager most likely will be more accommodating of your plans.

### **Step 3: Make a plan for each day and use a visual schedule for your child**

Since you are working from home, you will have meetings and projects that will require you to be available for work at specific times. Therefore, for each day, make a plan that includes your work activities and also your child's homeschool lessons.

If you have a meeting at 10 a.m., can your child be working on a worksheet or watching a video for a certain subject? Or is it better to give them some free time during that meeting to watch a show or do a favorite activity that doesn't require your supervision? Each day will be different, so planning your week ahead of time can be very helpful.

Make sure your child knows what to expect by using a visual schedule. Children with autism most often learn visually, and a visual schedule can go a long way in helping them know what to expect during the day. Remember to keep key activities such as meals, school start and end times, and other routines as much on time as possible to ensure some continuity in your child's day.

#### **Step 4: Identify which work and school tasks are high and low concentration**

To plan effectively for the day, understand which of your work and your child's school tasks need a high level of concentration and which ones don't. Then you can focus on scheduling those accordingly.

For instance, if you have a report that is due and you need focused time to work on it, plan to get up early before your child and put in the time you'll need to get it done without interruptions. Or, if you are not an early morning person, maybe you schedule time to work on it the night before after your child is in bed. The key is to find the best time for you that works.

#### **Step 5: Determine how you and your spouse will work together for homeschooling**

If you and your spouse are working from home, tag teaming with your child's schooling can help. Maybe you are really great with math, and your spouse loves doing all the science stuff. Split those lessons between you. Your child will benefit from your enthusiasm and playing to your strengths when teaching them. Even if one parent is back at work in person, maybe they could teach a subject or two in the evening or on the weekend. The advantage of homeschooling is that you can be more flexible of when you teach certain lessons.

#### **Step 6: Invest in the technology your child and you need**

Technology plays a big part in successfully working from home and homeschooling. If you've enrolled your child in an online school or they are doing the virtual option with their local school, make sure they have the laptop or tablet with the required software that they need to get their schoolwork done.

Also, be sure you have the technology you need to do your job effectively at home. Ask your employer about allowances they offer for equipment such as headsets, ergonomic chairs, monitors and more. Be sure you have the right stuff to effectively complete your work.

#### **Step 7: Be flexible**

Even when you plan your schedule down to the minute, something is going happen that will require you to be flexible. A problem at work will require you to drop everything to fix it immediately. Your child will have [a meltdown](#) over an assignment. You will be exhausted and need to give yourself some grace on certain days.

The good thing about working from home and homeschooling is that your schedule is not as rigid as it was when you had to be in the office, or your child had to at school. Take advantage of that to make accommodations to your schedule when needed. That is one of the biggest pros of working from home and homeschooling.

## **Step 8: Take breaks to avoid overwhelm – for both your child and you**

Let's face it, trying to work from home and homeschooling your child will be overwhelming at times. When you or your child are feeling overly stressed and anxious, take a break. Let your child go outside and play for a half hour. Take some time for yourself to sit quietly and breathe deeply to get control over your emotions. Call a friend to vent and gain some perspective. Consider a short power nap. Whatever you do, give yourself some space to reduce the overwhelm.

## **Step 9: Add physical activity to your day**

You need lots of energy to successfully work from home and homeschool your special needs child. One way to help keep your energy levels up is to [add physical activity](#) to your day. So when you or your child are feeling sluggish, go for a walk or bike ride around your neighborhood or play ball in the yard. Consider doing a short yoga session by following a video on YouTube. Even doing some jumping jacks, pushups and sit ups can energize you and your child.

## **Step 10: Take care of yourself**

[Taking care of yourself](#) is essential in this situation. You are giving so much to others – to your coworkers and job as well as your child and spouse. You need to spend some time each day doing some self-care. In addition, make sure you are eating well. This will help with your energy levels as well as keep you and your family healthy.

Whether you decide to homeschool your child for just this coming year or for the rest of their school years, you can set yourself up to do so successfully even if you are working from home.