

The Wall Street Journal: How to Keep Kids Learning While You're Also Working from Home

With school cancelled and many adults working from home in an effort to contain the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, families across the world face a daunting challenge: How can parents handle their work responsibilities and children keep learning while they're in such close quarters? And how can they maintain their mental health during it all?

One of the most important things to remember is families need structure, says Rebecca R. Berry, PhD, clinical associate professor in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at NYU Langone Health and also part of its Child Study Center. "Children thrive on routine, which can help them feel safe, regulated, and calm," she says. That means changing out of pajamas and into their school clothes, maintaining morning routines, and keeping regular bedtimes and wakeup times.

It's also important for kids to have a social life. "Young people really rely on social connections.

Not having it, over time, can have an effect on mood and self-esteem,” says Dr. Berry. Parents can arrange virtual playdates to help their children maintain these connections.

In addition, it’s necessary for each child to spend some time alone to decompress, says Dr. Berry. For siblings who share a room, she suggests that each child gets at least a half hour per day in the room alone to do what they wish.

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