

Working and parenting from home

Have realistic expectations of yourselves and your family

Some of us might be feeling self-critical and comparing ourselves to others. We might be feeling guilty especially when looking at social media and seeing families who have produced wonderful pieces of artwork, planted seeds, cleaned the house, had a healthy colourful lunch and managed to work from home! We might feel guilty that we haven't put in strict routines and relied too much on TV and electronics and the washing is piling up!

The most important thing is to be kind to ourselves and set realistic expectations; try not to expect a lot of yourselves or of your children.

Children need routines, but they also need flexibility

It's okay to not be sticking to that home timetable or planned routines!

What children need most of all is to know that their parents can keep them safe and that they can cope with their emotions, however big or small. This really is the most important thing we can do.

Recognise it's hard for our children and try to be accepting of them

They are used to running around in the park, playing with their friends, seeing their grandparents, and used to the structure of school.

They are going to get on our nerves. They will fight with their siblings, they won't always listen to what we are trying to say to them, they won't be learning what they would have done in school and will likely be spending more time on their screens.

Try to be accepting of this - let them know that we understand!

Seek out other ways to help us cope or feel in control

Recognise what we do have control of and let go of what we don't.

Allow ourselves to not always be our best

No one is perfect, striving for perfection is not the best way for any of us and learning to accept and model good enough, that we're not ok, that we have models is a really important lesson for us all.

It is perfectly acceptable to say, "I'm just feeling wiped out today - shall we have a lazy day?"

Try to be accepting of feelings

We all have feelings and feelings are okay, and it is also okay to not feel okay. How we recognise and respond to these feelings, for both ourselves and our children is the most important thing.

We might be worried about family health, financial pressures or the fact that we can't do some of the things that normally help us to cope.

We often try and explain or talk away worries for our children - acknowledge them, accept them and name them "we know it's really hard", "we know it feels scary". You are giving your child emotional language to understand and use. This is so important for them now and for their whole future.

Give ourselves and our children permission to express how we might feel in words and not in actions. Sometimes we will all use actions to show our feelings, for example we might shout, argue, or say something that is unkind, but we can always repair this. Apologise to your children and accept your children's apology and think together about what you can do differently next time.

Reconnect to our values

This is an event outside of our control and comfort zone and we are all in this together. Try to see the big picture where possible, this is one episode in our lives. We are all going to learn something from this, especially our children.

What do we want ourselves and our children to take away from this experience? To learn about themselves? Ourselves? The world around them?

Think about our values that we might have

These might be to look out for others; to be kind to other people who are more vulnerable; to be hopeful and positive; to learn that we can cope and adapt to change and be creative in response to this.

Maybe you can come up with some values as a family together and write some of them and put them around the house? This can be a reminder of what is important and an opportunity for you to praise children in line with these values.

Don't punish others if they might not be showing the values, instead model these and gently remind them how they can practice these and praise them when they do.