Juggling a full-time job and parenting can be hard. Working remotely while schools and childcare facilities are shut down has blurred the line between responsibilities to our employers and our families. As parents, we strive to create a healthy and safe environment for our kids. Structure and stability are important components in supporting the behavioral health of our kids. One of the biggest pitfalls of the "new normal" is disruption of routine. To help create a positive environment for everyone, work on putting together new routines for a sense of stability. These new routines can be simple or more detailed, the important thing is to keep open communication and work together – both with your colleagues and your family. Be gentle with yourself and those around you and reach out for help when it’s just not working.

Helpful Tips to Create a Sense of Stability

☑️ Remember your morning routine? Bring it back. Save pajama days for the weekends and get dressed! Have your coffee, make breakfast, whatever it is you did before the transition. Routine helps keep the mindset of business as usual.

☑️ Visit with your employer about the ability to adjust your schedule to balance home and work life more evenly. If you can, spread your hours out to fit your and your employer’s needs. Perhaps you could put most of your hours in when the kids are sleeping, like early mornings, during naps, or after bedtime.
Helpful Tips to Create a Sense of Stability (cont.)

- Communicate with your peers and prepare them for interruptions, like drop-ins from your new in-house coworkers. Remember that everyone is facing new challenges and if there’s one silver lining of this pandemic, it’s that people are finding themselves more understanding towards others and their life situations.

- A key component of remote work is having a designated workstation. This will increase productivity and focus. Have conversations and set boundaries with your children regarding this area and be especially clear if there is an important meeting or task you must attend to, be sure to let them know beforehand.

- Creating a daily schedule for the family can help decrease boredom and sleep deprivation. Work with your kids to create the daily schedule – they will be more likely to follow-through if they are part of the creation.

- Now is a great time to cultivate your child’s independence. Have snacks on hand and if they’re able, encourage them to help themselves. Create an activity box filled with art supplies that don’t require adult supervision. Let them know that whatever they take out, they are responsible for putting away. Give daily chores based on your child’s capacity and reward their achievements. While it is still important to limit screen time, this might be an opportunity to let them relax with their favorite show or video game.

- Set aside time each day to enjoy and interact with your kids; including them in tasks like making dinner or folding laundry will increase this time and teach them lifelong skills! Some days just don’t go as planned. If you’re having one of those days, reach out to a loved one to see if they can virtually babysit for a bit. Set up a video call and have them interact from afar, while you focus on getting some work done. For ideas on this, check out our tips for a virtual playdate - parentslead.org/sites/default/files/SocialInteraction.pdf