



INVOLVING YOUR KIDS WITH YOUR HOME BUSINESS

Working from home while caring for toddlers can be an extreme challenge. Trying to find the time to work on your business, without depriving your toddler of the love and attention they need can be hectic. Often times, work at home moms find that either their toddler is spending too much time in front of the TV or that the business is neglected. So, how do you get your business thriving while still being a good mom?

I can tell you from first-hand experience that maintaining a deep level of concentration on work in a home business for long periods of time is next to impossible. Nap time does offer some reprieve, but any break from the kids is usually short lived.

Even with older children, summertime introduces new challenges with kids running in and out of the house all throughout the day.

Set business ground rules and share them with your kids.

Your kids need to be aware that you operate a home-based business and know how to act accordingly. Set out basic rules that will allow you to operate your home-based business as professionally as possible, such as how to answer the telephone, how to answer the door, and how to act when clients are around. Include rules that will help make the time you spend working on your home-based business more productive, such as not touching Mommy's desk or not interrupting Mommy while she's in her office.

However, from both a business viewpoint and from the human relations viewpoint, it's best to have a clear understanding with each of them as to what kind of things they will and should do (answer the phone, open mail, pack and ship merchandise, etc.) and what they definitely are not to do (make payments to people without your authorization, make agreements, deals or contracts without asking you). Such advance agreements can avoid a lot of aggravation and make everything go much more smoothly.

Include your kids in your home-based business.

No matter what kind of home-based business you run, there's something your kids can do, and making your kids a part of your home-based business can be a great opportunity for you to spend more time with them and teach them things such as handling money.

For instance, one home-based business owner I know takes her age 7 and 9-year-old kids with her when she goes around replacing the products in dispensing machines, and has them count and organize change.

If your kids are working in your home-based business, I believe you should pay them. This is not only a great way to teach your kids the value of labor, but can be a business tax deduction for you as well.

Find creative ways to combine your home-based business and your kids.

If the client is agreeable, for example, you could hold a business meeting at MacDonald's, for instance, or some other restaurant that has a play area for kids. If a client is coming to meet with you in your home, perhaps she could bring her children so your kids could play together while you meet. Take your kids with you when you go to buy more office supplies or run other business-related errands.

Give your toddler his own office.

Most moms find that their toddlers want to be like mom as much as possible. So, set your toddler up with a table and chair next to yours. Make sure you have good office supplies for them. A coloring book, a few sheets of paper, crayons and a pencil are basic essentials. If possible, an imitation computer and play phone would be ideal office equipment. Then sit at your desk and work beside your child. Remember that a toddler requires a lot of praise, so be sure to look over at your child's work and compliment it from time to time. Also keep their attention span in mind. Keep your child's office time limited to a half-hour and only do this once a day. It keeps your child from getting bored with the "game". Be sure to reward your child for working and allowing you to work with some quality time afterwards.

If you have two or three kids with age range of 3 to 5, you will definitely be up to your neck. While often restless and cannot stay put for a minute, it does not mean that toddlers cannot be trained to cooperate with you while you are working. I know of a friend who was able to manage these 'coyotes' perfectly during their supposed 'office hours'.

My friend installed three tiny office desks beside her own office desk. These tiny offices were complete with a toy telephone, bunches of coloring books, Nursery Rhymes, Bible Stories, Children's Picture Books, a generous stack of 'writing paper'. Their snacks and beverages are prepared and kept in the refrigerator for them to go and pick it up whenever they are hungry. When mom is sitting at her desk working, the kids are instructed to work silently at his or her own desk. Everyone must show the 'assignments' to mom during breaks. Breaks are timed every hour, to allow the children time to play with each other and with Mom. After two weeks of firm implementation, the children automatically reported to their own little office space after breakfast and everyone silently did their own share of what mom has assigned them to do.

I would like to share with you some of the tips I have discovered to help manage your home office with children in your midst. Since children of different ages pose different challenges, I will present my tips in terms of age groups.

OLDER CHILDREN AND TEENS

We will look at older children first since they pose the least challenge to our work productivity.

Children, who are old enough to understand the idea of schedules and chores, are old enough to understand the needs of your home business. Explain to your children that you do your work at home so that you can be near them when they need you. But also be sure they understand that you must do your work so that you will have the money necessary to keep your house, feed the family and to provide them with money for entertainment.

Once your children understand the necessity of your work, then outline a work schedule and explain it to them. Do make sure they understand that emergencies are definitely an acceptable reason to interrupt your work. Then make sure they understand that between hours x and y, you will be doing work -- and then hold them to respecting your schedule.

INFANTS

Infants will never understand your needs for work. But fortunately, babies do well under a schedule or routine. Instead of expecting your child to work around your schedule, schedule your work around the needs of your baby.

It is simple. Babies eat, sleep and poop. Sometimes they play. Fortunately, babies sleep more than they do anything else.

Nap time offers the best advantage for getting your work done. Get your baby into a routine of eat, sleep and play, and you will experience unexpected levels of productivity.

TODDLERS

Develop a routine with your children for meal times, nap times, and play times. Work these times into your work schedule and adhere to them. If you fail to keep appointments with your children, your children will have less respect for your work and do more to prevent you from the completion of your work.

Don't be afraid to let your children sit in your lap while you are working. It helps them to feel wanted and it helps them to be a part of your daily life. There are times when it is okay for them to be sitting in your lap while you work, and at other times you need them out of your lap. Don't be afraid to tell them to get down and go play or read a book so that you can resume your work.

Permit your children to have their toys in your office. Often they will sit contently and play while you work. Just knowing you are near is enough to keep them happy.

Be prepared to take an hourly break to deal with your toddler. Try to do potty breaks at your hourly break and to do drink refills. This can help your child grow into a routine that will work well with your home business. At each break, spend a few minutes with your child giving hugs and kisses and talking with your child about what he or she wants to talk about.

Toddlers don't always do well with the routine, so be prepared to take a few minutes when needed to give the attention that your child so desperately needs in the moment.

IN CONCLUSION

I hope these tips serve to help you in the challenge of operating a successful home business.

My home business permits me to fulfill my financial obligations *AND* see my children grow up. I would never contemplate trading my home business for another kind of business. Even with the added challenges of dealing with toddlers in my home office, the upsides far outweigh the downsides.

Growing my own home business with children around has definitely given me a new respect for all people who successfully run a home business with kids in the work environment. I tip my hat to you... You deserve it!

Scheduling daily time with the kids will help you remember that your kids are just as important as your home-based business activities.

<https://blog.granted.com/>