

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WORK "FULL-TIME"?



Summary: *Many parents struggle with working full-time and being full-time parents. Many feel they are neglecting their children by working so much; others feel that they are not reaching their full potential by staying at home.*

Full-time work is defined differently by industry. For example, Marissa Mayer, CEO of [Yahoo!](#), has banned telecommuting and requires employees to put in face time at the office to be considered full-time. [Wal-Mart](#) considers 24-hours a week full-time, apparently so that the corporation does not have to provide health insurance for employees at the bottom of the totem pole. Some startups require an 80-hour work week. It all depends on where you are and what you do.

Many parents suffer from tremendous guilt for working outside of the home, even though this allows them to provide financial stability for their families. How do some parents deal with the dilemma they face?

If you must work outside the home, as many parents do, take the time to find an excellent daycare. This may go without saying, but it will bring you much more peace of mind if you get to know the childcare providers and talk to parents of other children in the daycare. When you're at work, you'll know that your kids are in a safe place. It may be that you and your partner can coordinate your work schedules to allow your children to have more time at home and less time in a daycare.

It's also important to keep your relationship with your partner a top priority. Communicating often about stress and your work/life balance will strengthen your relationship--and ultimately your family unit--as you determine what routine works best for you both.

Once your children get a bit older, it's important to establish schedules for them. Have a set time for homework and have "work-free" time for the entire family so that you can just enjoy being together. The children will eventually be able to take on more responsibility at home, which alleviates the burden on you and your partner tremendously. When you get home from work, you'll be able to have more family time, instead of having a mountain of laundry to fold and a sink full of dishes to wash.

Many parents also find comfort in calling their children during lunch or other work breaks. This can help you feel connected to your kids, even when you're not home. If you're on a business trip, utilize Skype and FaceTime often to have one-on-one conversations with your kids. By putting in effort to talk to them from your job, they'll still feel like a priority. On this same note, when you are home, put the iPad away and stay off your email--truly spend time with your family, including your partner.

On top of these tips, remember to go easy on yourself. You've got to find a way to be efficient in both the parenting world and the working world, and you have to prioritize accordingly. Be sure to communicate with your employer about whether you need additional flexibility in your schedule, and be prepared to demonstrate that you can be just as productive by doing so.

Ultimately, what works for one family won't work for another. You and your partner will have to determine what works best for you. There will be some trial and error, and what works one week may not work the next, but learning to go with the flow when things change and when conflicts arise will help you transition from one phase into the next as your children grow up.

Photo credit: [momtrends.com](#)

Sources: [blog.penelopetrunk.com](#), [parentfurther.com](#), [parents.com](#)