

Tip #1: Set Realistic Expectations



Recognize the difference - caring for kids while working at home is very different than typical 'working remotely' patterns – productivity cannot be achieved at the same level. This can be extended to those taking care of other loved ones like aging parents as well.

Tip #2: Check In Proactively



Initiate a check in conversation - with employees who you know are working at home with kids to understand their world and explore how to best support them in their work (e.g. flexible work arrangements, see below).

Tip #3: Focus on Priority Outcomes



Change your focus to what's most important for the employee to achieve - rather than focusing on how many hours the employee is working.

Tip #4: Set a Tone of Empathy



Verbalize your ongoing concern, care and support - experiencing lower productivity may leave some employees feeling guilty, disappointed, stressed, fearful etc. We need to provide assurance and understanding to employees. Providing positive feedback on work outcomes is extremely important during these times.

Tip #5: Check In Regularly



Ongoing touch points are vital - Childcare adds additional stress on employees and a lack of extra-curricular and structured activities have caused big changes in family routines. Highlighting resources like [EFAP](#) for all team members would be helpful – there are proactive resources as well as resources for those having difficulty coping. Self care is absolutely vital during these difficult times.

Above all, in whatever you do, show compassion.

Finding Flexibility in Work:

- Ask the employee to create their own temporary work plan (e.g. *When do they expect to be online and available? What are their top priorities and expected timelines for addressing them? How frequently would they like to connect with you? What is their preferred method of communication?*). Be open-minded when discussing the plan.
- Flexible work hours if there are times when other members of the household can care for children (e.g. *starting earlier, ending later*)
- Timing work activities like conference calls and video meetings around what works best for the employee (e.g. *nap times, quiet time, early morning*)
- Assigning work that can be completed in a more flexible schedule (e.g. *project work with milestones, weekly goals instead of daily goals*)

Resources:

Harvard Business Review – [“What Your Coworkers Need Right Now is Compassion”](#)