

## Supporting Our Parents and Carers at Work

Now that schools have restarted and home schooling for most is the norm, the pressure on staff with young children is rising. Many schools are setting tasks (e.g. make Anzac Biscuits or Scones, make and upload a video for six-year old's) which means that supervision of, particularly young, children must be accommodated within the working day. The increased pressure and stress on those staff impact their ability to be present at work, the cost of which is more likely to be at the expense of their self-care (e.g. sleep, eating, exercise etc.) rather than work performance. While there are strategies staff with young children can employ to help manage the current situation, teams and supervisors have a vital role to play in supporting our parents carers at work.

The below tips and suggestions have been collated from various sources and members of the ANU community to help staff with young children, as well as their teams and supervisors, to support our parents and carers during this time.

### Parents & Carers

- **Be open with your supervisor** - Consider what you 'need' and craft your hours to make it work for you. You may need to start later so you can get your kids set up in their routines, take the afternoons off to spend time with family, or to work later in the evening. Have a candid conversation with your supervisor and communicate with your team about your circumstances.
- **Virtual meetings** – If your children are attending a meeting with you, consider introducing them first and flag with colleagues you may be distracted at points and that you appreciate their understanding. If you need to be able to check-in on your children during a meeting, consider using your phone to sign into a meeting so you can wander around freely.

### Teams

- **Be open to connecting with kids** – Some parents will need to attend virtual meetings with kids in the room or even in their laps. Understand that for many parents this may be the most effective way to work at that time.
- **Meeting Basics** – Circulate agendas before and minutes and action items after for every meeting. Agendas in advance provide parents time to consider what they want to discuss with the team beforehand. Minutes and action items support parents who may be distracted at points during a meeting to review and to clarify any aspects they are unsure of post meeting.

### Supervisors

- **Establish structured and regular check-ins** - This could take the form of a series of one-on-one calls, if they work more independently, or a team call, if their work is highly collaborative. Be sure to examine their workloads and check-in on how they are coping. Be open about the realities and difficulties of taking care of children.
- **Establish Rules of Engagement** – To not only support parents, but your entire team, set expectations for the frequency, means, and ideal timing of communication for their teams. See 'Establishing Rules of Engagement'.
- **Don't make assumptions** - It's important to be sensitive and respectful towards the realities of parenthood, though be conscious not to make assumptions about what work they can or cannot manage, and what support they may or may not need. If in doubt, ask and rely on them to advise what is and isn't possible at the time.

### Want more information about establishing daily routines?

Read

- Trello - [A Remote Work Guide for Parents](#)
- UNICEF – [7 Ways Employers Can Support Parents](#)



Australian  
National  
University

- HBR - [How Working Parents Can Let Go of Perfectionism](#)

Listen

- ABC RN - [This Working Life Podcast](#) – 20 April 2020

Watch

- Insider - [14 parents share their work from home plans, and tricks](#)

**Have feedback, questions or would like to suggest other topics?** Email [community.wellbeing@anu.edu.au](mailto:community.wellbeing@anu.edu.au).