

# When Everyday is Take Your Child to Work Day

by Dr. Steven Wilson



The emerging “new normal” for working parents has blurred the lines of what were formerly very clear distinctions between work and home life as millions of Americans are teleworking because of COVID-19.

Now, as many parents and guardians are discovering, teleworking can translate to every day being “take your child to work day.”

“When we hear words like ‘structure’ and ‘boundary’ we typically think of terminology reserved for kids,” said Dr. Joseph Rieman, medical director of The Children’s Home. “But the mass influx of teleworking has changed the typical structured environment for many parents, which can blur what previously was a discernible difference between work obligations and family obligations.”

Dr Rieman said the diminished emotional support and connection with colleagues and friends in the workplace is comparable to the sense of emotional loss some kids feel when separated from classmates in school.



“If parents are constantly giving in to demands from the home office, coupled with familial domestic demands, then stress, fatigue and adverse health risks are not far behind,” said Dr. Rieman. “I hope parents and guardians know these feelings of being overwhelmed are normal; but there are ways to mitigate the stressors.”

Some of those mitigating techniques can stem from forcing one’s mindset to shift from “work mode” to “parent/guardian mode” says Debbie Gingrich, vice president of behavioral health at The Children’s Home.



“I like to call it ‘transitioning your brain,’ said Gingrich. “When the workday is done, try something that physically forces a shift from work to home. Walking the dog, exercising, start prepping dinner...anything you can do that you normally wouldn’t do at the office is extremely helpful and can actually let your ‘work brain’ rest,” she said.

Another way to help manage home and work boundaries is to get the kiddos involved.

“Children, especially younger ones, love to feel like they’re being helpful,” Gingrich said. “Could they staple papers? Maybe set the table for your lunch break? If they feel they’re a part of your home office, it can often lead them to be on your side. This translates into some level of understanding about the need, for example, for some quiet time if mom or dad are in a virtual meeting or on an important call.”

As the entire nation is navigating these new adjustments, parents and guardians should not feel they have to tackle these new stressors alone. The Children’s Home’s Counseling for Caregivers program is available, and you don’t need to have a child enrolled or affiliated with our organization to receive our help.

Visit [www.tchcincy.org](http://www.tchcincy.org) to learn more about Counseling for Caregivers.

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### **More “From Home Office to Home” Brain Transition Tips**

Blast those tunes! Music is shown to lower cortisol levels, the stress causing hormone in our body, as well as trigger pleasure centers, and improves auditory processing, learning, and memory. Some research even indicates that music increases and enhances our immunity-boosting antibodies.

Avoid mission creep. While using every bit of tact possible, it’s usually helpful to explain to supervision when you’re available for work and when you must take care of your family with things like homework, dinner, scheduled family time etc. Most employers who have teleworking colleagues will understand.

Share the wealth. If you have a spouse or domestic partner, consider trading off domestic duties vs. work duties with your partner so the other person can concentrate solely on work for a set amount of time.

Decompress. Turn it off. Walk away. That email will still be there for a few minutes.

If you’re overwhelmed, get help. Our agency has specialists who are here and available. Visit [www.tchcincy.org](http://www.tchcincy.org).