Away From Home: A Working Parent's Guide



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Abstract

Balancing work and family life can be challenging for parents, especially when job responsibilities require them to be away from home. "Away From Home: A Working Parent's Guide" offers practical strategies to manage this balance effectively. It addresses key aspects such as maintaining strong family connections through regular communication, creating a supportive network of caregivers, and utilizing technology to stay involved in daily activities. The guide also emphasizes the importance of quality time over quantity, encouraging parents to make the most of their time with their children. By fostering a collaborative family environment and staying organized, working parents can achieve a harmonious blend of professional and personal fulfillment.



1. Introduction

This guide offers insightful tips on managing the emotional and logistical challenges of being a working parent, such as establishing routines that provide stability for children and ensuring open lines of communication with both family members and employers. It highlights the importance of self-care, recognizing that a well-balanced and healthy parent is better equipped to support their family. By prioritizing quality interactions, delegating responsibilities, and leveraging available resources, working parents can create a nurturing environment that fosters growth and resilience for the entire family.

2. Hire A Good Babysitter



Finding a good babysitter isn't always a piece of cake. Here, find advice on where to start, payment and more.

Finding a great babysitter can feel like finding a needle in a haystack. With all of the options out there—online and in person—it can be difficult to know where to even start. Luckily, we're here to help. Whether you're looking for a sitter who you can count on to pick up your kiddos after school, offer help with your infant or watch your children during date night, we've got you covered. Here, check out our top tips for every step of the way, from where to look to what to prep before the first session.

Where Look for a Babysitter

"Finding a babysitter these days is a serious time commitment and struggle for parents,"

"Parents will want to make a game plan before entering the current babysitting landscape one that's ripe with stiff competition and even sitter stealing," she continues. All that's to say it's not uncommon to feel overwhelmed at the prospect of finding a babysitter for your family. But don't worry—we've got you covered. Below, check out our tips to bring you one step closer to find the best caregiver for your little one(s) and to give you some welldeserved child-free time.

Personal recommendations

While parents can begin their babysitter search in a variety of ways, it's most common for them to turn to their inner circle (think: Family, friends and neighbors) for referrals, says Brown. Ask loved ones and pals which sitters they've used and liked to weed out those who

will (and wouldn't) work. Brown also mentions that social media networks and online groups—like Facebook or Nextdoor—could also offer great local sitter recommendations.

Of course, just because a sitter was recommended to you doesn't mean they'll be the right one for your family. For example, you might feel nervous about a 14-year-old caring for your preemie, even if you know their family well. With that in mind, ask lots of questions about the potential babysitter before you call to scope them out. Plus, don't feel pressured to hire a sitter just because they were recommended by someone you know.

Organizations you trust

Moms on The Bump message boards say they often hire their babies' daycare teachers or the people who care for the kids during services at their places of worship or other community centers—and Brown agrees. Why? Well, a lot of the time those organizations do background checks and require specific training, such as infant CPR. (Of course, you'll want to double-check with the organization to be sure.) Another bonus: Your child already knows those people, so they'll probably feel more comfortable with them from the get-go.

Babysitting apps and websites

Babysitting apps and websites, like Care, are other viable options for finding a standout sitter. seamlessly connects parents to sitters, offering the ability to browse profiles to find potential picks. The online platform provides information about babysitters, including specific experience, availability and reviews from others, says Brown. While on Care.com, parents can easily post a babysitting job—or better yet—use the site's on-demand feature to be quickly matched with babysitters in their area. "Parents can book a sitter in a little as 15 minutes using this feature, which is especially helpful for parents in a pinch, looking for one-off help, or wanting to speed up their search," explains Brown.

3. Childproofing Your Home



Once you bring your baby home, caring for them—and making sure they're protected becomes an all-encompassing concern. Childproofing your home is important part of keeping your baby safe. This is especially key because accidents are the leading cause of injury and death for young children.

Fortunately, by using simple childproofing measures, such as cabinet locks, doorknob covers, and gates for stairs, along with supervision, you can prevent many accidents and tragedies. Learn the best ways to childproof your living space to keep your little one safe.

While all accidents can't be avoided, doing your best to make your home safe will help to prevent many of them. There are many steps to follow in order to fully childproof your home, including the following:

- Set the temperature of your hot water heater to 120 degrees F.
- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home and near bedrooms.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors near sleeping areas in your homes if you use gas or oil heat or have an attached garage.
- Install covers on electrical outlets.
- Place cushions on the corners of furniture.
- Cut window blind cords or use safety tassels and inner cord stops to help prevent your child from strangling in window blind cord loops.
- Secure furniture and large appliances to the wall, so that your kids can't tip them over if they climb on them
- Check the floor regularly for small items and toys that younger children can choke on. This includes marbles, balls, uninflated or broken balloons, small magnets, small Lego pieces and other toys with small pieces.

Is your home childproofed?

Featured Childproofing Products

- KidCo Electrical Safety Assortment Kit
- Safety First Essentials Child-Proofing Kit
- KidCo Electrical Safety Kit Assortment
- Safety First Family Room Child-Proofing Kit

- Safety First 46-Piece Home Solutions Family Room Child-Proofing Kit
- Safety First Outlet Plugs
- KidCo Anti-Tip Furniture Strap
- KidCo Soft Jamb Door Stop eliminates the removable rubber tips that kids can choke on

Securing Doors to Unsafe Rooms with Door Knob Covers



One of the first steps in childproofing your home involves making sure that your kids can't get out of the house and can't get into rooms that aren't childproofed.

Door knob covers make it hard for little hands to get a grip, turn, and open doors. They should be placed on all of the doors leading out of your home and on bathroom doors. It is also a good idea to place them on closet doors and on the doors of any other room that you don't want your child to get into.

Featured Childproofing Products

- Safety First Secure Grip Door Knob Covers
- Safety First Lever Handle Lock

• Mommy's Helper Lever-Lok

Cabinet Locks

Just as you don't want your child to open doors to get to unsafe areas, you don't want them to open bathroom or kitchen cabinets that may hold unsafe products.

To secure your cabinets, the big options are usually an interior latch that you screw into your cabinets or an external lock. Each has their drawbacks, with the big problem with internal latches being that they often stop working. The downside of an external lock is that you have to remember to put them back on each time you open your cabinets.

To be extra safe, you might use a 'layers of protection' childproofing method and install both.

Featured Childproofing Products

- Safety First Cabinet Flex-Lock (as pictured above)
- KidCo Cabinet Lock
- Safety First Cabinet Slide Lock
- Another Safety First Cabinet Slide Lock

Internal Cabinet and Drawer Locks

An internal cabinet and drawer lock can be more difficult to install than an external lock, but you don't have to remember to reattach it each time that you open your cabinets and drawers.

Featured Childproofing Products

- KidCo Finger Protector Cabinet & Drawer Locks
- KidCo Adhesive Mount Cabinet/Drawer Lock
- Kidco Swivel Cabinet & Drawer Lock
- KidCo Drawer and Cabinet Lock

Stove Guard

Your stove can be a big hazard to your kids, who can get burned by food that is cooking on the stove or turn on the burners and get seriously burned.

In addition to using the back burners when cooking and turning handles away from the front of your stove, a stove guard can make your stove safe.

Similar to the stove guard, plastic guards can keep your kids away from electronics in your home, like your TV, VCR, or DVD player.

Featured Childproofing Products

- Adjustable Stove Guard
- TV Guard for Large Televisions isn't it annoying when your kids turn the TV on and off while you are trying to watch your favorite show?
- Parent Units VCR Guard
- Safety First Power Strip Cover

Appliance Locking Strap



Appliances in your home pose their own safety hazards. In addition to opening the oven and getting burned, your kids might open the dishwasher and pull out a knife and get cut, or pull unsafe items out of the refrigerator.

An appliance latch or lock can help you to secure all of these kitchen appliances.

A toilet lid lock is also a good idea so that your kids can't open the toilet and drown.

Featured Childproofing Products

- Safety First Safety 1st Oven Lock (as pictured above)
- Parent Units Refrigerator Guard
- Safety First Toilet Lock
- KidCo Toilet Lock

Swing Stair Gate with Extensions

Securing the stairs in your home to prevent falls is another essential part of childproofing your home.

Gates should be installed on both the top and bottom of every staircase in your home.

Featured Childproofing Products

KidCo Configure Gate (like the one pictured above) - great for odd landings at the bottom of stairs

- Evenflo Wide Spaces Swing Gate
- One Step Ahead Wide Spaces Swing Gate
- KidCo Safeway Baby Gate
- Safety First Swing 'N Lock Gate

4. Strengthen your family's bond



Amid life's hectic pace and challenges, a strong and happy family may seem an impossible dream. But, it is achievable, and two experts share how.

Competing for your child's attention against their friends, endless extracurricular activities and the lure of technology makes modern parenting far from child's play.

And let's face it, parents are pretty time-poor, too.

But in all the hustle and bustle of everyday life, it's worth striving to build vital, lasting relationships in families.

The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children reports for most children, their family offers them love, support and a sense of belonging.

And a strong, happy family unit can help kids develop social networks, equip them with resources and a safe place to learn and explore, and teach them about the world and the rules that govern it.

It also reports children who have a very close relationship with one or both parents when they are aged 12 to 15 have higher levels of resilience at ages 16 to 17.

Two of Australia's leading psychologists, Sandy Rea and Michael Carr-Gregg, offer some simple advice to help your entire family thrive.

Look after your wellbeing



Sandy says happy family dynamics are founded on the mental health of the parents.

You cannot expect your children to thrive if you are not thriving yourself.

So, take time to look after your own health and wellbeing.

And look at what sorts of examples you are setting your kids with your own behaviour.

Are you drinking too much?

Do you spend too much time on your phone?

Are you happy and fulfilled or stressed and anxious?

Encourage playdates

Families shouldn't expect to spend every spare moment of their time together.

Michael says encouraging children from an early age to have a rich repertoire of friends is an "insurance policy for the future" on their ability to obtain, maintain and retain relationships.

"It's the single greatest predictor of any kid's wellbeing," Michael says.

Set boundaries

Never be afraid to have expectations for your kids.

Children need structure and guidance from parents to feel like they are on sure footing and to make good decisions.

"You are not there to be your child's best friend," Sandy says.

"That is not your job. They are not there to validate you.

"You are there to ensure parental oversight, show love, care, fun and guidance."

Talk to teens informally

Michael says often the only way to have a meaningful talk with a teen is in an informal setting.

"Anything else and they cringe," he says.

"So, talk to them while you are driving in the car or kicking a ball in the park or cooking the dinner."

Connect one-on-one

Everyone likes to feel special.

For big families that can be difficult.

But spending regular quality time with each family member — whether that be a grandparent, a child or sibling — is a good way to check in and strengthen individual relationships within the wider family unit.

It doesn't have to be a grand occasion.

A simple phone call to an extended member of the family or a five-minute chat with a child at bedtime will strengthen the relationship.

Delegate jobs



Giving children chores improves happy family dynamics.

It takes some pressure off parents to have kids chipping in.

Kids who contribute to household tasks have feel a greater sense of competence and responsibility.

"Giving kids responsibility for helping to prepare a meal, or making sure that they have the capacity to go down to the shops to buy a carton of milk, shows that you trust them," Michael says.

"I would get my kids to put together the furniture from IKEA.

"To this day they remember that I trusted them to do that."

Eat meals together

The family that dines together stays together, according to Michael.

"Ritual and tradition give families a sense of 'us-ness', meaning and belonging," he says.

"Virtually nothing is more important than establishing those little rituals.

"The kid that eats alone in their bedroom is a kid who is headed for trouble."

Set phone limits

While some families swear by regular digital detoxes to help maintain close bonds, it's not easy for everyone to put their phones away.

Michael suggests that parents set very clear parameters around phone use.

And that means no screens in the bedroom.

"Having limits set on the amount of time that you can be on your phone just comes from the university of the bleeding obvious," he says.

"You don't want kids with their faces in a screen the whole time."

Communicate



Laying the foundations for honest communication should start from the time children are small.

"If you stuff up big time when they are little and fail to create an environment where they feel safe, valued and listened to, then you're going to have a much more difficult time later on," Michael says.

"So being firm, kind and understanding when the child is going through early adolescence is the secret of maintaining the communication later on."



5. Set work-life boundaries

While many of us come to success in unconventional ways, we all deal with the constant and dynamic struggle to find that perfect balance between our work lives and our home lives. The fact is, it's impossible to achieve anything resembling work-life balance if you don't set boundaries. Here are a few tips to help you find the middle ground and be successful both at work and at home.

How to set work-life boundaries

Work-life balance was challenging enough before we reached the current era of hybrid work schedules and fully virtual setups. Now it's even harder. Although remote work can be an opportunity to place boundaries and physical distance between an individual and the traditional office environment, a 2021 survey from Owl Labs showed that 55 percent of respondents worked longer hours at home than they did in the office. Now more than ever, it's up to the individual to enforce the necessary boundaries to achieve a healthy work-life balance. These seven strategies will help.

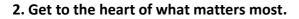
1. Let go of the work-life balance myth.

You've probably heard that the perfect work-life balance is a myth. This idea that you can be 100% present at work and 100% present at home – regardless of what's happening in either place – is nearly impossible to achieve. Studies have found that striving for it can actually be detrimental to mental health and happiness. After all, we only have so much attention and awareness to give, right?

That doesn't mean that finding what the Buddhists call "the middle way," or a place of balance between two opposites, isn't worth working toward. Seeking a balance between your work and your home life is healthy and can significantly improve both your professional success and your private life. You just need to have realistic expectations.

The first step in work-life integration is to know yourself and your strengths. Never try to be someone you're not, because that will cause both mental and physical strife. Come to terms with where you may lack, and ask for help from loved ones, trusted mentors and friends.

The next, and probably the hardest, step is to reframe the idea of work-life balance. Cognitive role transitions, or the way your thoughts switch from work to home life, are natural and happen all the time. But when you try to put hard boundaries on them and stop certain thoughts from happening, you can cause more harm than good.





Determine what the ideal work-life integration looks like for you. Does going to a yoga class once a day or making it to your daughter's swim meet each week make you feel fulfilled? Is a spin class once a week your path to being a saner person? Identify your core needs, make the decision to incorporate them into your schedule, and don't look back.

The things that help keep you going every week and make you feel balanced and whole will sustain you throughout your life and career. Once you know what matters most, you can work on setting boundaries around those activities so that whether you're at work or home, you can be more fully present for those around you.

Whatever matters most to you, make a list and figure out which items are negotiable and which aren't. When you have a more complete picture of what you're willing to flex on, you can work toward better work-life integration.

3. Be connected, but set limits.

Let's face it – we're all connected all the time, thanks to electronic leashes like our smartphones and work computers. In fact, a report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2021 found that more than 38 percent of workers did some or all of their work at home or during off hours. While it can be aggravating to have to answer emails at your son's lacrosse game, it can give you an advantage too, and not in the way you might think. The trick is to be connected, but somewhat unpredictable.

It seems counterintuitive, but if you change up the timing of your responses (and work), you keep your boss and your co-workers from expecting responses at set intervals on specific days. Vary your response time – sometimes answering back immediately and sometimes waiting a few hours or a day to respond to an email. It keeps your contacts on their toes and lets them know you're still responsive, but that they can't have a set expectation of when you'll get back to them.

Responding this way will allow you to take a break from work emails without worrying that something needs your immediate attention. Those wanting an answer will just have to wait until you're ready to respond.

4. Guard your downtime.

It's easy to fall into the trap of being always connected and always on, but research has shown that the best way to be successful both in your work and your home life is to find time to rest, restore and unplug. Downtime helps the brain integrate what it's learned or accomplished, and it inspires creativity. It's also vital to nurturing close relationships and building strong bonds with people outside of work.

It's crucial to schedule downtime and ensure that nothing infringes on it. A hard stop from work gives your brain and body time to come back down from stressful events and situations, and you become better equipped to deal with life outside of the office. By protecting your downtime, you can become happier and find that elusive middle path between work and home life.

It also pays to do mini digital detoxes when you can. Whether that means putting your phone down for the evening or going a whole weekend without looking at your work email, unplugging from devices allows our brains to rest and be more present with the world around us.

5. Don't stress about work-life balance.

Try to take the pressure off of striving for the ideal work-life balance. Adding another thing to worry about on top of an overloaded to-do list isn't going to help you be a better parent or a better employee. Realize that the perfect work-life balance doesn't exist. Instead, strive for a work-life integration that suits your needs both as an employee and as a human being.



6. Set up a designated work space if working from home.

Healthy boundaries aren't only established with bosses and co-workers; they're also something you need to establish with yourself.

If you work from home, designate a quiet area of your living space just for working. There will likely still be times when you're seated at your kitchen table with a laptop, but a dedicated space lets your mind shift in and out of "work mode" when necessary. If you don't have a spare room to work out of, try sectioning off part of your bedroom or living room and use headphones when necessary.

7. Follow a set schedule.

Give yourself a schedule and stick to it. If you work from home, try to start at the same time every day rather than sleeping in (or starting work too early). This will get your body used to early-morning productivity.

Also, remember to take your lunch break. In the absence of a lunchroom, it's easy to work through your break. To avoid this, set a firm lunchtime for yourself and block it out on your calendar so you don't schedule meetings during your break. While flexibility can be a good thing, remember that your time is just as important as anyone else's. Finally, one of the best things you can do to maintain work-life balance and structure is to turn off your computer when you're finished working, giving some finality to the end of the workday.

Classic work-life balance mistakes to avoid

Now that we've gone over what you should do for work-life balance, let's identify what you shouldn't do. Here are some common mistakes to avoid while practicing boundaries in the workplace.

Not setting or communicating your boundaries

The most common mistake one can make when establishing boundaries is not communicating them or being clear enough with those around you. Perhaps someone you're working with forgot you work in the Eastern time zone while they live in Central Time. In this case, politely let the other person know you may be trying to log off for the day while assignments continue to roll in. Whether you're an entrepreneur prioritizing tasks or a worker coordinating with your bosses and colleagues, you should not only establish your boundaries but also reinforce them as necessary.

Hyper-focusing on work-life balance

Do you time your lunch breaks down to the millisecond or leave meetings right at the 30minute mark no matter what? If so, you may be a bit too rigid and hyperfocused in the pursuit of maintaining the "perfect" work-life balance. An optimal work-life integration is one that helps you feel fulfilled in both the personal and professional areas of your life. Pay attention to how you feel at the end of the workday, and consider how much energy you're able to give to your personal pursuits. This is a good (nonscientific) measurement of how well you're maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

6. Why Giving Gift Can Be Good for Kids

It's the holiday season and there's a lot of shopping happening. However, I hear a lot these days about teaching kids to be frugal by restricting the number of gifts they get or by cutting

out gifts altogether and while I'm sure that parents must have their reasons for doing so, I really believe there is a lot of goodness in gift giving.



Gift Giving Teaches Kids About Generosity

My toddler loves to give gifts. Seriously. She gets really hurt when I don't let her "present" the present and I feel that birthdays, anniversaries and other occasions when she gets to give gifts are great opportunities to teach her about being generous and sharing. She learns to give graciously to friends and family and takes joy in their happiness.

Gift-Giving Teaches Children About Thoughtfulness

When buying or even, making gifts for others, you can ask children for options that would be best suited for aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins. Personalizing a gift by wrapping in kiddie artwork or writing a message inside a book for a cousin are just small touches that go a long way in teaching even, young children about thoughtfulness.

Choosing Gifts Shows Kids the Value of Money

When buying presents either for your own kids or for others, involve them in the shopping process. It is a fantastic and fun way to teach children about the value of money. While this may not be possible when planning a surprise gift, you can easily do it when kids give you a list of presents they'd like. You can browse online stores, scout for deals and show them how to basically shop around for deals and discounts so that you get the maximum bang for your buck.

Receiving Presents Encourages Gratitude

Most importantly, gift giving and getting is a simple but effective way to teach young children about gratitude, about appreciating what they receive and about being thankful. Children learn to express thanks for all gifts, big or small. They learn to appreciate the thought behind the gift.

However, at the end of the day, it is up to you, the parent, to teach them how to turn giftgiving and receiving into an opportunity to learn essential values and life skills.



6.1. Why Cleaning Services Can Be The Perfect Gift?

Are you looking for a perfect gift for your mum this Christmas? Whether it is your sister, wife, girlfriend, mum or co-worker, gifting a house cleaning service can be ideal. This shows your love, appreciation and care for that person. According to the latest survey, around 72 per cent of people in Adelaide have gifted cleaning services to their close ones while 58 per cent of people have received it as a gift. Booking a professional cleaning service as a gift can save a lot of time and energy and allow the recipient to spend more time on things they love the most without worrying about the home's cleanliness and hygiene. Whether it is an expert end of lease cleaning Adelaide or a thorough house cleaning service, explore the reasons why cleaning services can be the perfect gift:

1. A Thoughtful Way To Show Gratitude And Care

There is no denying that a professional cleaning service offers a tangible advantage in reducing the load of back-breaking housekeeping chores. This can be a perfect gift for someone you love or care the most. Alleviate their stress of maintaining a clean, organised and healthy home. Highly trained cleaners will come to the place and remove stubborn stains and caked-on grime in a few hours. They will clean oven inside and out, remove stains from toilet, vacuum carpets and much more during the process. This service can be taken as a token of love, appreciation and care for the recipient.

2. It Is A Gift Of Time

Cleaning an entire house from top-to-bottom takes a lot of time. You can save those precious hours by gifting a thorough cleaning service. Whether it is a dirt-laden carpet or a filthy kitchen appliance, professional cleaners can achieve desired results within a given timeframe. Outsourcing the cleaning service frees up precious time for the recipient so that they can pursue what they love or spend quality time with their family. However, if it is a matter of rental move-out at the end of a lease, do in-depth research and look for a reliable end of lease cleaning Adelaide to protect the hard-earned bond money.

3. It Promotes Good Health And Well-Being



A well-organised and tidy abode leads to a healthier and hygienic indoor environment. You can book a cleaning service for your special ones and reduce the amount of dust, dirt, stains,

pollen, pet dander and other allergens. They will come to the place, remove visible dust and stains, vacuum carpets and upholstery, and clean and disinfect kitchen appliances and bathroom surfaces using green cleaning products to ensure a healthy living space.

4. It Super Convenient

Choosing and buying the right gift for a special one takes a lot of time. On the other hand, many cleaning companies come with simple online booking and payment processes. You can schedule the service and pay online in a few clicks. This can be the most convenient way to arrange a practical gift for your special one. The best part

5. It Can Be Universal Accepted

Believe it or not! Professional cleaning services appeal to many individuals, regardless of gender, lifestyle and age. It is a thoughtful gift that can be appreciated by the recipient- be it a busy working professional, single mother, senior family member, couple, etc. Make sure you do proper research and book an experienced company that can understand a client's specific requirements and deliver a quality result without asking for additional charges.

6. It Can Help During Pregnancy

The pregnancy can create a lot of physical as well as mental challenges when performing regular house cleaning tasks. Gifting a clean house can alleviate their stress and make her journey easy and relaxed. It can be the best way to demonstrate your care, love and concern during those crucial phases.

7. It Can Be A Great Support For Seniors/Elders



Different cleaning tasks, such as scrubbing, mopping, vacuuming carpets or removing dust from top surfaces, require a physical effort. So, gifting cleaning services for your elder parents or grandparents can be an ideal way to show your care and gratitude. A cleaning service can prevent injuries if that special person has a mobility issue due to growing age. You can offer a professional house cleaning, carpet steaming or pressure washing service as a gift.

8. It Creates Long-Lasting Memories

Materialistic gifts may be forgotten in a few years, but the experience of a clean and wellmaintained house can last long, and they may feel special. It is a unique gift that can create unforgettable memories —which can be hard to get from a traditional gift. Whether it is a regular house cleaning service or a specialised end of lease cleaning Adelaide, make sure you book professionals who have at least 5-7 years of experience in their field.

Conclusion

By focusing on effective communication, fostering strong support systems, and prioritizing quality time with their children, parents can ensure that their professional responsibilities do not detract from their family relationships. The guide encourages a holistic approach, emphasizing the importance of self-care and the efficient use of resources to create a harmonious and fulfilling family dynamic. Ultimately, with the right strategies and mindset, working parents can thrive both at home and in their careers.

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