



BC Aboriginal
Child Care Society

Tips For Working Remotely

The BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) is a Centre of Excellence for Indigenous early learning and child care (IELCC). We are committed to nurturing excellence through community outreach, education, research and advocacy, to ensure every Indigenous child in BC has access to spiritually enriching, culturally based, high quality early learning and child care services.

Working remotely from home can be a challenge for even the most experienced. Here are some tips on how to make it work.



Self-Care

- **Don't be too hard on yourself.** Working from home can be a big transition, try to ease in. It's okay and normal to feel any combination of lonely, isolated, stressed, frustrated, relieved, relaxed, energized, or productive.
- **Scheduled breaks.** Set an alarm to get up and stretch every hour or so. Walk around your home and change work location. Move away from your email to eat lunch.
- **Support your spiritual and wellness needs.** Make time to do whatever helps you feel grounded and reflects your spiritual needs. Talk to an Elder, go for a nature walk, do a smudge, yoga, etc.
- **Set "office" time.** Set "in office" hours with your supervisor and communicate these with both colleagues and family.
- **Set your workspace.** Talk to family members or roommates about the hours you are working from home and the ground rules during those hours. Remember this may be a big transition for them too. Reassure them and help them understand. Assume that you will be interrupted.
- **Consider using a white noise machine or app.** This can help to reduce noise distractions around your work area.
- **Pay attention to ergonomics.** Use the most comfortable chair you can with back support. Also consider investing in a hands-free headset or earbuds.
- **Take care of your eyes.** Reduce your risk of eye strain, discomfort and the potential injury by looking away from the computer often (ideally every 20 minutes) and focus your eyes on something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Morale

- **Stay aligned with company culture and make time for "water cooler" moments.** Working from home means you don't have the same opportunity for chitchat and human connection. Find ways to share. These little things help reduce feelings of isolation and anxiety.
- **Dress and groom for a regular workday.** Your morning routine plays a large role in determining your mindset for the day. You'll find you're more productive when you dress for the day.
- **Use video.** To avoid feeling isolated, use video technology to connect with your team and colleagues in a more intentional, human way.
- **Emphasize one-on-one check-ins.** Don't cancel your one-on-ones. Even a two-minute instant messaging chat, video call, or text message chain can make employees feel more connected.
- **Ask for feedback on your remote situation.** Ask your colleagues for regular feedback on how the situation is working out. Any change takes time to get used to, and everyone's specific work situation and team dynamics are different.



Communication

- **Overcommunicate.** Share whatever you think colleagues will want to know. However, figure out how to flag urgent or important items and confirm what channels (e.g. Slack, Teams, email, phone) you will use to communicate.
- **How should your team reach you?** If you manage people, be clear with them about any new or different communication and productivity expectations you have. Don't assume they know.
- **When can your team reach you?** Let your team know when you are available. Discuss expectations and clarify what "office hours" mean for each member of the team.
- **Clarify expectations.** Connect with key colleagues around communication, work priorities, and what success looks like. Don't let people make assumptions.
- **Note your project progress.** Remote workers need to be especially proactive and alert colleagues to progress on project and longer-term goals.
- **Resolve issues quickly with a phone call.** Email, text, instant messaging and other written methods of communication are prone to misunderstandings. If you sense this is happening, call instead.
- **Promptly return emails, calls, and voice mails.** Keep in mind that people tend to be more aware of time when working remotely. Have a direct conversation about expectations and timelines.
- **Keep up more casual communication habits.** Try to follow the same rituals and habits to maintain relationships and a sense of normalcy.
- **Create your video studio.** Videoconferences are commonplace for remote workers. If possible, try to have a plain background behind you and dress and groom professionally. Check that you have adequate lighting and a decent microphone (most earbuds with mic work).
- **Create a system for sharing documents.** Use the company drive, Onedrive and collaboration software to share files. Don't scatter files across email and your personal hard drive.

Working at Home with Children

- **Discuss Your Challenges with Your Supervisor.** Talk to your supervisor/HR to discuss what adjustments to your work schedule might be appropriate in order to work while watching your children.
- **Be Creative with Your Schedule.** If you have another adult home with you, consider a split schedule. Each adult has responsibility for the children for a portion of the day to allow the other exclusive time "at work". It may not be possible to get all your work done during regular business hours if you're also taking care of kids. Consider which deadlines and meetings are immovable and figure out a staggered schedule with your family and supervisor so you can work early mornings or evenings instead of regular hours.
- **Have a Routine.** Continuing to have a daily routine helps everyone stay occupied and manage some of the anxiety caused by change. Write out a schedule and post it in a place the whole family has access to it.
- **Use Visual Cues as Reminders for Family Members.** If you can move into a different room, try to ensure other family members act as if the parent who's working remotely isn't home during their scheduled work shift. This can be hard to do if you can't move into a different room. Designate a specific area as your work zone and use it consistently. Build the association that when an adult is sitting there, they're working. Try using signs, tape, post-its or headphones as visual cues. If you don't have another adult to help, visual cues become even more important.
- **Let Your Children Make Some Decisions.** Giving children the ability to choose some of their own activities and self-serve meals and snacks helps build independence—and allows you to get more uninterrupted time for work. While older children can pull out and put away activities on their own, toddlers will need a little more help. Consider setting up activity stations for them to choose from.
- **Communicate with Coworkers.** It can't be helped. Children will interrupt your work. Your coworkers will be more understanding about interruptions if you warn them ahead of time.
- **Take Breaks with Kids and Downtime Without Them.** If you can give children your full attention during breaks, they can look forward to them, and it might just be easier for them to get through your working blocks too. Make sure each adult in the house has downtime to themselves. Working while managing children means you are always on. That can take a toll. Trade off alone downtime if you have multiple adults in a household. Lone parents may need to be more creative. Wait until the weekend, early morning or late evening for alone time.

