



How to Work at Home with a Deadline, Small Children, and No Babysitter

by Judy Arnall, BA, CCFE

One of the hardest challenges of parenting small children is when you absolutely HAVE to get something done and they are all over you. It can really test your patience. There were many times when my partner was working out of town and I had four children under seven to keep occupied while I had to meet deadlines.

The first thing to remember is to stay calm and realize that they are just being who they are - children. They have no idea that you are under pressure, and don't understand how they could help you. Being egocentric is part of their development and while they nod when you tell them that they must play alone, they really don't understand that it means. So it's still up to you to keep them busy.

Here are some tips to try to get some work done.

- When you have exhausted Netflix, stock up on DVD's at the library and pay the children \$1 to watch each one.
- Pack away excess birthday and Christmas gifts when received and pull them out now.
- Pack away half their toys into boxes or buckets, and rotate them. Pack away old toys and pull out a new bucket when you need some time.
- Arrange a play date at someone else's house. Be a good friend and reciprocate when they need time too.
- Join a babysitting coop or hire a homeschooling teen to come over and play with your children.
- Wait until naptime. Put a fan near their door. The white noise will keep them asleep longer.
- Send your partner out with the children with spare clothes and lots of money. You will text them when you are done and they are allowed to come back.

- Buy passes to the local zoo, science centre, museum and play places where the children can run free. Plot yourself in the adult sitting area and bring along your work.
- For older children, signal to them you are working, even when you are sitting at the kitchen table, by wearing a red or green hat. A red hat means not to bother you unless there is blood or fire. A green hat means that you can be bothered, but please try to figure it out first.
- Set the clock an hour ahead and put the kids to bed an hour earlier.
- Let the kids stay up late to watch movies on the condition they let you get some work done. The minute they bother you, the movie goes off and they go to bed. Give two warnings and then do it.

If it is really impossible to work with children underfoot, and sometimes it is, relax and admit defeat. Children are only young once and enjoy the time you have with them. Wait until you can hire a formal sitter and fully concentrate on your work.

Judy Arnall, BA, CCFE (Certified Canadian Family Life Educator) is a child development expert on non-punitive parenting and education practices. She is regularly interviewed on Global TV, CTV and City TV. She just released a new book titled **Parenting With Patience: Turn frustration into connection with 3 easy steps**. WWW.PROFESSIONALPARENTING.CA Jarnall@shaw.ca 403-714-6766, Join our list for monthly notifications of free parenting webinars

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