

4 Ways to Balance Family and School



From [Jamie Littlefield](#),
Your Guide to [Distance Learning](#).
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Balancing school and family life can be a challenge, even for online learners. While many older adults choose to continue their education through the internet, they often find their study time interrupted by spouses and children who miss them and don't understand the need for "alone time." Here are a few suggestions for maintaining good relationships with those you love while studying online.

1. Set some ground rules for all parties. Chances are you'll need some peace and quiet to get your work done. Setting specific times and posting a schedule on your office door (or kitchen fridge) can be a great way to form a common understanding and keep resentments from forming. Let your family know when you'll be available and when they shouldn't disturb you.

If you're in an online chat meeting, for example, you may want to hang a "do not disturb" sign on the door. Let children know what instances are appropriate for interruption (a stuffed bear causing the toilet to overflow) and which are inappropriate (they have a sudden urge for ice-cream). This street goes both ways, however, and you'll also need to set some ground rules for yourself. Be available to your family during your off-hours and give them the attention they need. Let them know that they can trust you to be available when you say you will, and they'll be more willing to wait.

2. Don't forget play time. Online courses can get intense at times, particularly if you're enrolled in more than one. But, don't get so caught up that you forget to have fun. If need be, set aside a "family night" to play games or find entertainment with your children or a "date night" to spend a little quality time with your spouse. You'll get much needed relaxation and they'll appreciate seeing you in a less stressful mood.

3. Be an example. If you have school-aged children, use your own studies to set an example for how they can succeed in their own classes. Try setting aside a study time each afternoon when you study along side your kids. Serve a nutritious snack (think smoothie and apples rather than green beans) and play relaxing music. Chances are they'll mimic the study skills you model and their grades will benefit. Meanwhile, you'll get a chance to complete your own studies while spending some time with your kids. It's a win-win.

4. Involve your family in your learning. Don't just slink away into the back room and come out, red-eyed and silent, after a few hours of intense studying. Let your family know you're accomplishing something meaningful. If you discover something interesting, bring it up at the dinner table or discuss it while driving

your kids to school. Let your spouse tag along on field trips to the art museum or city council. Chances are they'll enjoy being involved in this part of your life and you'll appreciate the chance to share it.

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