# **Pandemic lessons from a work-from-home dad: Drop everything and have fun**

**Source : Abhishek Talwar, Author of ‘Biplob the Bumblebee’ the Eco – Warrior Superhero.**

It’s over a year now since a large part of the world is locked indoors with varying degrees of freedom to move about. For some of us this is now a way of life. [Work from home](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/family/working-from-home-get-an-early-start-and-other-tips-for-moms-6521581/) (WFH) is here to stay and the concept of a work-life balance is getting redefined faster than most of us can cope. While one can debate the merits or otherwise of this change, the fact remains that it is here to stay. And like any evolution, this too brings its own set of challenges and opportunities.

For one, there is the opportunity to bond with one’s homebound [kids](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/family/make-the-most-of-your-summer-at-home-with-kids-7328548/). While this is being touted as a great time to rekindle the relationship with your kids, the reality on ground is vastly different. What with managing household chores, online class schedules, round the clock virtual meetings and trying to stay out of each other’s hair, we’re certainly spending a lot of time together. The ‘quality’ aspect though is another story!

Having said this, there is a silver lining to this cloud. Sure, we all hope and pray physical schools start, sooner rather than later. Meanwhile, with a little smart planning, one can make the most of the situation we’re saddled with. The key is to use this proximity for constructive engagement with our [children](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/family/ten-tips-for-parents-to-connect-well-with-their-children-6289498/). Intimidating as this may sound, it’s quite simple. ‘Constructive engagement’ implies using the time together to introduce your kids to new experiences and learnings, while having dollops of fun! Not only will this help deepen the bond with your children, it will leave you both with memories and lessons that will last a lifetime.

We’ve all played some sport or the other while growing up and some of us still retain a degree of proficiency at them. Use this time to introduce your [child](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/health-fitness/how-to-make-sure-your-child-is-not-missing-out-on-fitness-during-the-pandemic-7169080/) to a sport. Or any other skill that you possess. Draw up a schedule, where you coach them three or four times a week, for a couple of hours.

In my case, it’s cricket. We would have hour-long fun coaching sessions in the building compound. In barely a couple of weeks, his friends requested to join us. What started out with me chucking the ball as my son worked on his footwork has today bloomed into an informal academy of sorts. So much so, that I’ve had to refer to coaching videos on YouTube to keep up with the precocious learners that these kids are. Forget bonding with my own son, I’m now the proud mentor to a bunch of budding cricketers! The point is, share your knowledge with your child. It doesn’t matter what it is. What matters is that you are sharing with them.

**Listen**

There is hardly a WFH [parent](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/family/how-can-parents-avoid-passing-their-anxiety-to-their-children-7232692/) who hasn’t faced a situation where they’re on a video meeting and suddenly need to mute and go off camera because their child demands attention for some seemingly inane reason. More often than not, it is simply a case of your child seeking attention. Rather than fight it, the smart thing is to use these moments to do something ‘fun’. If possible, pause whatever you’re doing and give them your complete attention. You will be surprised to see kids responding very positively to this. Rather than losing your cool, I’ve found addressing it in this manner to be more effective. I usually end these little chats by seeking their permission to go back to work, with an assurance that I won’t be disturbed again. Pretty much everyone else too faces similar issues at home, to varying degrees, and people understand if you need to go off screen for a minute or two. The child on the other hand learns to take responsibility for her actions. This behaviour on your part sends a very powerful message that you respect your child’s ability to take responsibility for her actions.

**Grab the moment**

This one came to me almost as an epiphany. One afternoon, our children were playing ‘catch’ in the same room where I was working. Frustrated at being unable to concentrate, I joined in the game, with a caveat. Each throw would be accompanied with a question – it could be a math sum, name of a capital, identifying the verb / adjective / noun or something else. Eventually, it ended up being a brilliant 40 minutes we spent together bonding, learning, relaxing, laughing and recharging for the tasks ahead. This is now a ritual, where every other day we play ‘catch – catch tables / capitals’ or whatnot. Bottom-line: Sometimes it’s just great to drop everything and do something fun together. It’s a brilliant tool to refocus everyone’s energies on work, not to mention the bond you end up fostering.

**Team Up**

Team up and get the household chores done. Whether it is dusting the place or fixing something, it’s always great fun to do it together. The camaraderie is infectious and even doing simple chores together serve to create memories that will last a lifetime!

**Movie Time**

This all-time classic never fails. I cannot even begin to express the joy of [watching](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/family/wondering-what-to-watch-with-your-kids-on-netflix-here-are-some-recommendations-6399089/) a movie with the kids, munching on some absolutely sinful snack! Sometimes these are movies that I’ve selected (which invariably feature animals / nature or a message to love animals and nature!), other times it’s something they want to watch. Either way, they give us memories that we’ll cherish for a long time to come.

These are just some of the things I’ve found useful as a father. Give them a shot. At worst, they will prove to be a starting point for you to find your own version of fun things to do. Things that will go a long way in building a bond with your children. In the end, there is no rocket science – our kids and we want to spend time together. These are merely tools to help things along!