



How to Handle Calls From Your Children While You're at Work

Personal calls are unavoidable at work, but employees should be considerate of their employer's demands and work needs. You can keep your employer happy and help your children limit calls by making sure your children understand which calls are appropriate.

Encourage your children to learn to take charge; explain why it's important that you not be bothered with unnecessary interruptions. Your children may even enjoy their freedom and feel empowered because you trust them with responsibility.

Check-in Calls

Give your children a convenient time of day to call for a brief check-in. Schedule a daily call with your child care provider. These calls are important for your peace of mind and for your children's safety. When you know precisely when the calls will come, you'll be better able to concentrate.

Emergency Calls

No one can schedule an emergency, but beware of false crises. Make sure your children know what a real emergency is and discuss ways to handle nonemergency situations. For example, talk about what your child could do if he gets locked out of the house when no one is there. Give him some alternatives to calling you at work. Perhaps a trusted neighbor or friend close by will agree to keep a key and help when your child encounters difficulties. List important telephone numbers where children can easily find them.



Inappropriate Calls

The wrong kind of call can put a crimp in your work. Be clear about the types of calls you will not permit from your children. A discussion of dinner plans and clothing selections, for example, or attempts to resolve disputes should not be handled over the phone.

Plan Ahead

Weekly household planning will help prevent unnecessary calls at work. Plan menus and shop once a week so there's enough food in the house and everyone knows what to expect for dinner. If you want several chores accomplished after school but anticipate a fuss, negotiate those problems ahead of time. When you get home, ask about minor and major disputes. Listening to your children may tip you off to other potential disputes. Settle them ahead of time so you don't have to hear about them at work.