

Working and Schooling From Home

Presented by NAIFA's Young Advisors Team

Featuring Brian Haney, CLTC, CFS, CIS, CFBS, LACP, CAE, Vice President of *The Haney Company*, and Kelly Haney, blogger at www.crazyhealthlady.com.

The husband and wife team of Brian and Kelly Haney provided a webinar sponsored by NAIFA's Young Advisors Team offering insights and tips for families of professionals who homeschool their children or who, because of COVID-19 restrictions, will be virtually schooling their children from home.

Kelly, with Brian's support, has been homeschooling their daughter for three years. Now, faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, many financial professionals may be facing situations in which their children will be learning from home. Homeschooling is when the parents elect to teach their children at home instead of enrolling them in public or private schools. Virtual schooling from home is different, in that involves online teacher-led instruction. However, it may involve a higher degree of direct parental involvement than traditional classroom schooling, and in that way shares some of the challenges and benefits of homeschooling, Kelly said.

Getting Set up for Success

"School at home doesn't need to be a reproduction of the classroom experience," Kelly said. Education in the home setting allows parents to move beyond some of the limitations classrooms can impose and can encourage creativity.

Routines for children learning at home can be helpful, but they should be flexible. Creating a routine helps set expectations for children and parents. Homeschooling parents often find they can accomplish more in less time than traditional classrooms because homeschooling eliminates wasted time and allows the parent-teacher to concentrate attention on one or a handful of students.

This efficiency provides children with time to pursue "non-curriculum related activities," Kelly said. "In other words, give them plenty of time to just be kids."

Schooling at home requires a learning environment that supports focus and concentration, builds in breaks and encourages independent learning and thinking by children. It's also important to share the load as a family. In two-parent households, parents must "communicate and support one another so one parent doesn't end up resentful, because they are carrying the lion's share," she said. "It will be a lot easier if everybody's involved and it'll be a lot more enjoyable if the whole family is involved." It is also important to empower your kids to get work done independently.

Trial and error will help parents find a good balance between virtual schooling from home and parents' need to work from home. Have patience with your kids and yourself, Kelly said.

Preparing to Teach

Parents helping their children succeed in virtual schooling from home must understand in advance what the child's school and teachers require from students and parents. Know when students need to attend online classes and when schoolwork needs to be turned in, for example. For homeschooling, it's also crucial to explore state and local legal requirements.

"Once you understand the basic requirements and curriculum, it's a great time to add additional learning activities to enhance the experience," Kelly said. "Again, this applies to everybody, no matter what form of schooling you're doing. Don't be afraid to try something new and fun to supplement the core subjects or whatever your child is learning."

Resources are available to help parents. Children who are virtual schooling from home may have access to a school system portal. "Make sure you and your child know how it works," Kelly said.

Online homeschooling support and collaboration groups, including listserves and Facebook groups, are available. [Khan Academy](#) is a free curriculum resource. It can supplement virtual schooling or provide a complete curriculum for homeschooling. [Outschool](#) provides live online classes via Zoom on many subjects. Many museums and parks do in-person or virtual tours and provide teaching resources.

Tailoring Learning for Your Child

Everyone learns differently. Homeschooling or virtual schooling gives parents "the chance to be present and determine the learning style of your child," Kelly said. "This can help you optimize the experience for them. Particularly if your child has been in school up to this point you may not be very familiar with how your child learns or what's easier or harder for them."

Being present gives parents an opportunity to learn how their children learn and tailor the educational experience to fit their needs. Homeschooling and virtual schooling may provide flexibility to adjust schooling so it is more effective. You can help your child love to learn, she said.

"Don't prepare them for a test, prepare them for life," Kelly said. "Making sure they are able to socialize even during these strange times, is important."

Take Care of Yourself

This is a difficult and stressful time for everyone," Kelly said. "So, find meaningful ways to rest and take a break."

This may include building in time for exercise, for both parents and kids. It's also important to have sufficient time for rest and sleep.

"Be mindful of your own mental health," she said. "You won't be any good for kids if you're anxious or stressed out of your mind."

Work-Life Balance Through Value-Alignment

When considering the homeschooling or virtual schooling at home, it is important for parents to ensure that their values are in proper alignment, Brian said. Very few people, he said, if they made a list of the top ten things they value, would have their jobs or money at number one. For most people those probably fall in the middle of the list. “My top two are easy,” he said. “It’s faith and family, and work is probably number five.”

But when people look at their daily calendars and how they spend their time, they may find that work ranks higher on the list. This could be an indication that values are out of alignment.

Brian offered a quote to capture the concept of value-alignment: “I’ll never regret the money I didn’t make, but I will regret the time I didn’t spend with the people I care about the most.”

Keys to getting values in alignment include:

- Modeling a work week to promote efficiency and that blocks out time for high-value priorities, like family.
- Making time to preserve your mental health and working on creating a positive attitude early in the day.
- Communicating with people who are important to you to stay connected and avoid the drift into isolation.
- Challenging yourself – giving yourself room to grow so when the pandemic is over you can point to accomplishments.