

# homework

The challenges and rewards of working from home

Back in our mothers' day, a woman had to work outside the home to earn a paycheck. In today's technology-driven world, it's increasingly possible for moms to work from the comfort—if not always quiet—of their own homes by telecommuting, working freelance, or by starting their own businesses.

While at first blush working from home can seem downright fabulous, there are a number of challenges facing work-from-home moms. With a proper separation of office time and mommy time, and some financial planning thrown in, you can make it work.

The reasons most moms seek opportunities to work from home are indeed child-related. Kim Nieting, a contract attorney who lives in Algiers Point, likes the fact that she can set her own hours and work around her children's schedules. "I can work on my time—whether it's midnight or 9 a.m.," she says.

Mary Cooper, an Austin, TX, mom and founder of Mommy Mixer, a babysitter broker service that is coming soon to NO, loves spending mornings with her children, then working after they eat lunch and go down for naps. "I am not ready for an office job where I am gone from my two children from 9 to 5," Mary explains.

Working from home has other benefits as well. Baton Rouge mom Neila Stone, the event planner for the Louisiana Banker's Association, points out the ease of not having to dress to impress. "I can work in my pajamas, which means way less dry cleaning," Neila says.

With the perks come challenges. A big complaint of work-from-home moms is the overlapping of work time on family time, and vice versa. Because the home is also the workplace,

often children interlope at inopportune times.

"I try to do my editing during nap times and after the kids go to bed," says *nola baby* editor Leslie Penkunas, mom to a three-year-old daughter and a five-year-old son. "But deadlines hit, and the best-laid plans go out the window. Kendall wants to 'help mommy' edit, while Cole begs me to



get off the computer so he can play his games. It's not always smooth, but I love my work, and I love being at home with my kids, *most* of the time."

Because work-from-home moms tend to have such flexible schedules, it's often hard to separate work from household chores. Kim says, "It's sometimes difficult to work from home rather than having a scheduled time that you are at an office each day and removed from the tasks that face you at