While the woman in the cubicle to your left may look like she has it all together, what with her impeccable presentations and well-behaved kids (on Instagram, at least), there's a good chance she'll admit to running around frazzled every morning. Finding a solid balance at work when you've got kids at home isn't easy, and for most working parents, it's not something that comes naturally.
Parents who work are feeling more stressed than ever. A 2015 Pew Research Center survey found that working moms and dads feel stressed, tired, rushed, and short on quality time with their children, friends, and partners. Definitely not #goals.

While there's no guaranteed way to make every day a perfect one in the office, your 9-to-5 doesn't have to forever feel like an episode of The Amazing Race. You can get everything done at work (well) and still make it to daycare pickup on time.

Check out this expert-approved game plan. Your career -- and your sanity -- will thank you.

1. Create a workday ritual. Hectic mornings are a reality for working moms, and switching from mom mode to work mode can -- and should -- take a little effort. When you head into the office, you want to be fully present, just as you want to be fully present with your children. Instead of mulling over whether you should have made your child wear a jacket right up until your first meeting, create a beginning-of-workday ritual to signify the transition to work, suggests Amber Rosenberg, a San Francisco–based life coach who helps working moms manage time and stress. "This can be as simple as taking two minutes of deep breaths before heading into the office or setting a one-word intention that signifies how you want to show up at work that day," she explains.

2. Negotiate a more beneficial schedule -- for your employer. Thanks to email and the 240 other apps you have on your phone, workdays now seem to be endless. But! Employers are more willing than ever to offer flexible schedules to working parents. If you're thinking of asking your boss for a few days a week at home or a shorter workweek, keep two things in mind: Let them know what's in it for them, and be specific. "Smart companies know that it's much less expensive and time-consuming to make it work with you than to hire a new employee," says Rosenberg, who often helps clients negotiate flexible work arrangements. "Create a proposal with this in mind, and focus on what's in it for them. You want to let them know how working flexible hours can save the company money, and what that looks like, specifically."

3. Separate work from home -- even if you work at home. While working from home may sound like a dream to many (and in some ways it is), it's also not without its challenges. You are,
after all, living where you work. Even if you don't have a home office, designate a spot in your house solely for working (and if you can, try not to eat lunch there). Also, when your workday is done, resist the urge to sneak your laptop onto the couch to work a little more. Your couch is *supposed* to be for relaxing and unwinding.