

THE ADVENTURES OF
**MAGICAL MOMS &
THE WONDER KIDS**
VS. THE WICKED WORK FROM HOME



The year is 2020. Offices, schools, and daycares close their doors as COVID-19 sweeps across the planet. Everywhere, home-bound mothers struggle to support their kids' sudden shift to "Zoom school," while managing their own work and keeping up with household responsibilities. The days are exhausting, the responsibilities relentless, and the ability to meet everyone's needs impossible.

With no signs of the pandemic loosening its wicked grip on the world, or their crazy schedules, moms search for a way out of this mess of sleepless nights, hangry kids, and avalanches of laundry. Ghosted by the powers that be and betrayed by the farce of social media standards, moms tune out the noise and tune into their mom vibes. They have honest conversations with their kids and let go of harrowing, external pressures, and expectations. And while this is not a fix on its own, it does feel like some sort of magic. Together, they unlock the power of collaboration to co-create workable solutions for life at home that become the stepping stones to creating a new normal.

ABOUT THIS COMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light many social inequalities, one of which is the lopsided division of labor in the home. Our research, as well as national data, indicate that women seem to be the most affected compared to men. Even though both men and women are doing more housework and child care than usual, surveys suggest, the division is not more equitable than it was before lockdown.

Inspired by the cohort of seven families from a diary study we conducted over one week in June 2020, this comic represents how moms and kids discovered small, yet transformative, shifts in behavior during their time working and learning from home. The diary study allowed us to study behaviors and actions as close to their natural context as possible. The enthusiastic responses to our prompts inspired us to share these peeks into genuine bonding and family moments.

The first three scenes illustrate observed pitfalls in the work and learn from the home experiences of mothers. The following six scenes show small changes that can allow moms and kids to begin working and learning side-by-side in harmony.

ABOUT THIS COLLABORATION

HeyMama teamed up with SOUR to identify ways to support working mothers in meeting the increased demands of a blended professional, domestic, and educational space. Together, we investigated the situation and found ways for moms and kids to hack their environments for greater productivity, collaboration, and joy. While we work on creating adaptive and inclusive design interventions that will support and encourage mothers and kids to collaborate, this comic illustrates glimpses from our research and presents preliminary insights into how small changes toward a collaborative household can begin.

LEARN MORE

[hey mama.co](https://www.hey mama.co) - @hey mamaco

[sour.studio](https://www.sour.studio) - @whatissour

HEY MAMA™

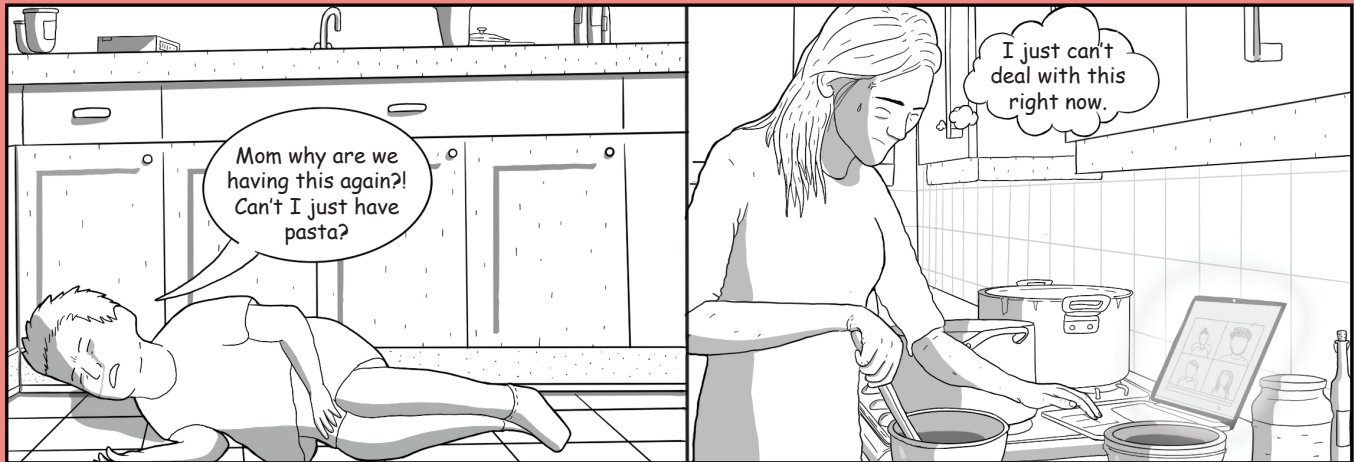
SOUR

A GLIMPSE INTO WHAT WE OBSERVED...

(observed scenes from our diary study prompts)

Meltdowns happen. When the stress of feeling behind, left out, unheard, and hungry builds up over a day, weeks, or even months, both moms and kids can “lose it.”

Scene 1



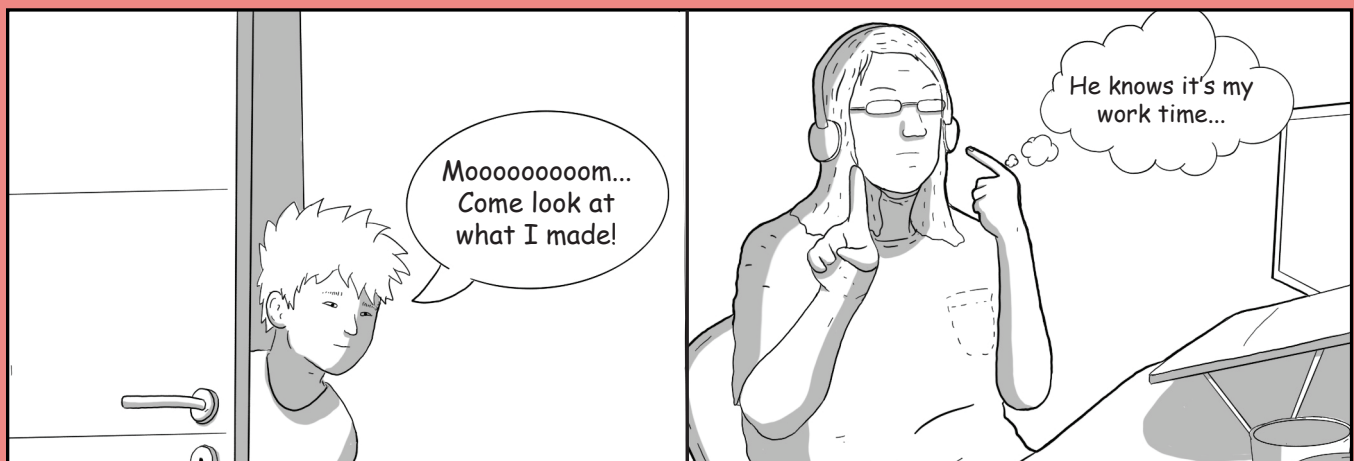
Day-to-day, it's easy to get stuck on autopilot. Working and schooling at home are new experiences moms and kids are learning to navigate that require changing some old habits.

Scene 2



Kids want to be collaborators. Now with moms and kids spending more time together at home, there needs to be a renewed and shared understanding of the needs and boundaries around space and time.

Scene 3

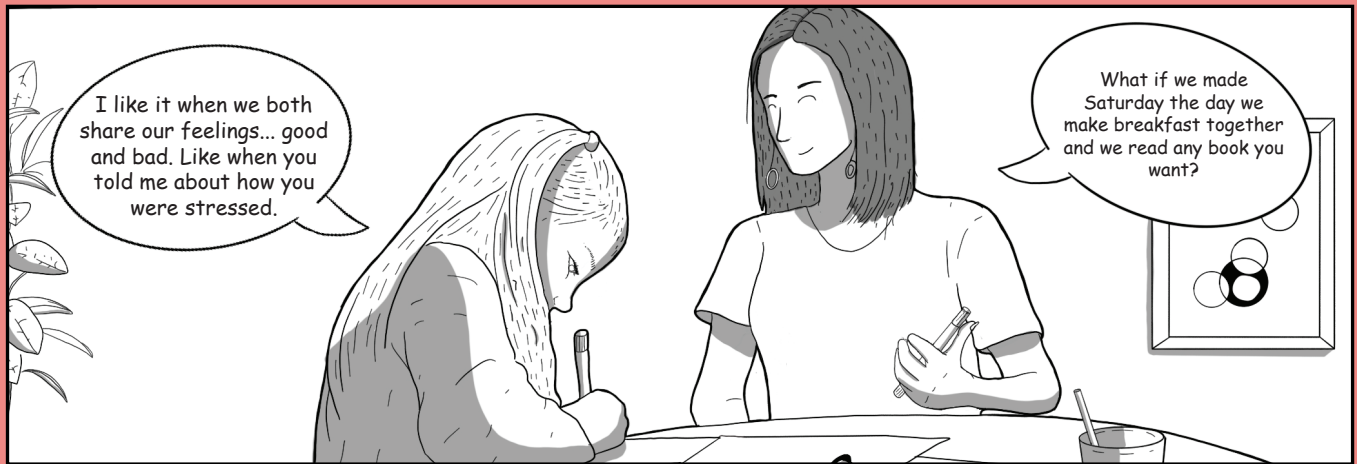


FROM MELTDOWNS TO TEAMWORK

(observed scenes from our diary study prompts)

Set up formal check-ins at the start and end of the day and week, where you can review schedules, troubleshoot challenges, and reflect on how to work better together.

Scene 1



Give kids the tools they need to take initiative by making your kitchen and craft areas as self-serve as possible. Organize things where kids can find and reach them to ensure they can snack and create independently.

Scene 2



Create co-working zones for kids to feel like you're together, even when you're working on your own stuff.

Scene 3



FROM PERFECTION TO CONNECTION

(observed scenes from our diary study prompts)

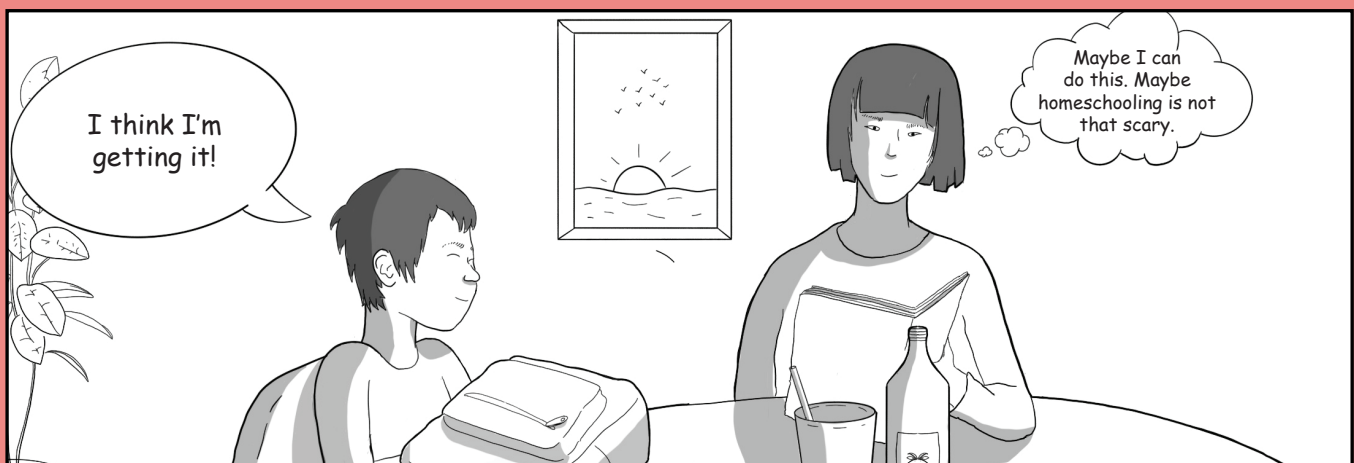
Being present, not perfect, is what matters most. Carve out time each day with your kid, even if it's short, where you and your child dedicate fully to each other.

Scene 1



Moms know best. You don't have to be a teacher or even know the material to be a supportive guide for your child's learning process.

Scene 2



Keep the physical space open, but establish scenario-based boundaries to respect everyone's need for "alone time" (e.g. when moms are on calls or kids engaged in play).

Scene 3



Thank you for reading!

Our mission is to create adaptive and inclusive products that will support and encourage mothers and kids to collaborate. While we work on creating them, we hope you enjoyed these glimpses into our research.

heymama.co - @heymamaco

sour.studio - @whatissour

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