



# Family Matters

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02



## A Note From Kendelle

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02



## Three Key Points From Mediation

- The mediator is neutral.
- The mediator facilitates settlement discussions between disputing parties.
- Mediation is a private, voluntary, and confidential process.



## Must-Have Digital Tools for Your Remote Office

At the start of 2021, Statistics Canada reported that 32 percent of Canadians were working from home. That is a significant increase from the 4 percent reported in 2016. Moreover, 80 percent of those surveyed indicated they'd prefer to work remotely at least half the time when the pandemic restrictions are lifted.

If you're considering making working from home a permanent part of your post-COVID lifestyle, you'll need a good space and the right digital tools to help you succeed. Here are the must-have digital tools for your remote office.

[Continue reading](#)

Page 03



## Back to School Tips for Parents

As summer comes to a close, parents and kids, start to think about the inevitable return to school. But after about two months of lazy summer days, getting back into a routine can be a challenge. To make the transition easier for parents and kids, here are some back-to-school tips.

- Start a routine early
- Get supplies
- Become acquainted with the new school
- Make a lunch plan
- Find a school partner
- Set up a homework schedule
- Open communication

[Continue reading](#)

Page 04

## A Note From Kendelle



While we enjoyed a beautiful summer here in the Lower Mainland, fall seemsto have arrived a little early this year. Nevertheless, it was a tough summer for BC wildfires and families in the surrounding areas. Like many British Columbians who love to vacation in the beautiful Okanagan of our Province, my family ultimately cancelled our vacation in OK Falls this summer. At the time, the Thomas Creek fire was ravaging the BC

mountainside and threatening the town of OK Falls. That was only one of over 255 fires that burned across BC this summer, wreaking havoc on homes, businesses, and farms. The summer of 2021 was coined by many media outlets as the “Summer of Smoke.”

On a brighter note, as a parent, I am looking forward to the start of the new school year. Hopefully this year will bring some more normalcy for the kids as cohorts will be a distant memory and organized school sports and extracurricular activities will be returning after a 17-month hiatus. Although the BC government has invested \$87.5 million to improve school ventilation in BC schools, at this point, masks will continue to be part of the daily routine of students and teachers. I am thankful for the summer reprieve we experienced from some of the COVID protocols, and I am keeping my fingers crossed that our Province continues to move forward in Stage 4 and beyond.

## Three Key Points From Mediation.

- 1 The mediator is neutral:**  
The mediator does not take sides and will remain unbiased through-out the process.
- 2 The mediator facilitates settlement discussions between disputing parties:**  
It is the mediator’s job to manage the negotiation between you and your spouse. If your communication with your spouse is not at its best – that is okay. It is the job of the mediator to move the discussion forward in a productive manner.
- 3 Mediation is a private, voluntary, and confidential process:**
  - a. Mediation is private because you are not dependent on a public body to facilitate the process. You may hire a private mediator and mediate in a private location.
  - b. Mediation is voluntary because you generally cannot be forced to mediate a matter.\* Both spouses must be willing to participate in the process.
  - c. Mediation is confidential because there is no public record of the proceeding or outcome particularly if you finalize any settlement in a Separation Agreement.



\* In BC and in certain circumstances once litigation has been commenced between divorcing spouses, one spouse can serve on the other spouse a form called a Notice to Mediate. The Notice to Mediate will trigger an instructive process which compels both parties to attend mediation.

# Must-Have Digital Tools for Your Remote Office

At the start of 2021, Statistics Canada reported that 32 percent of Canadians were working from home. That is a significant increase from the 4 percent reported in 2016. Moreover, 80 percent of those surveyed indicated they'd prefer to work remotely at least half the time when the pandemic restrictions are lifted.

If you're considering making working from home a permanent part of your post-COVID lifestyle, you'll need a good space and the right digital tools to help you succeed. Here are the must-have digital tools for your remote office.



## ○ Communication tools

There are many different ways that you can stay in touch while out of the office. You can use these tools for quick check-ins, meetings, conferences, webinars and more. Communication methods for remote offices are usually email, video, or audio calls. Some of the top platforms include FaceTime, Zoom, WebEx and Skype. Microsoft Office Teams also has the capability to keep you in touch with others from your office. Regular communication with your manager and teammates will help you stay visible when you work from home.

## ○ Cloud storage

One of the essential tools you'll need is some cloud storage. Having documents and files in the cloud makes it easier to share and edit with co-workers, mainly if you are all working from home. Your company may already have a cloud storage option, but if not, the most popular ones are Google Drive and Dropbox. Adobe has cloud space available for you and your team if you work in a more creative atmosphere. You need to subscribe to one or more of their Creative Cloud programs to gain access.

## ○ Project management

Keeping track of the projects while your team is working remotely has its challenges. However, with the right project management apps, you'll be able to keep everyone focused. With project management apps, you can create timelines for the work and assign and track tasks among your team. The most common tools including Trello, Basecamp, and Asana.

## ○ Data security

One serious reality for remote workers is the need to keep their systems safe. Because you'll likely be using the same devices for professional and personal use, you must consider adding some extra software to protect them. Cybercriminals have been trying to take advantage of the disorder caused by the pandemic. A report by Deloitte states that remote employees are 47 percent more likely to fall for a phishing scam.

The cost is not just lost information, files, or data. It can also cost your employer thousands of dollars to fix the damage caused by a cyberattack. So, at the very least, you should have a password manager, VPN software, and antivirus software. Some popular password manager apps are 1Password, oneSafe, and LastPass. The best antivirus software for 2021, according to Investopedia, is Bitdefender Antivirus Plus, Norton 360, and McAfee Antivirus Plus. Your company may already have tools and policies in place to protect you while you work from home. If you're not sure what those are, ask your manager or IT department.

## ○ Your remote space

Experts have been saying for several months that the remote working model is here to stay, at least part of the time. Most Canadians are on board, with 80 percent saying they'd like the flexibility to work from home more often. The key to success with your home office is to have the right digital tools, including communication, cloud storage, project management, and security solutions.

# Back to School Tips for Parents

As summer comes to a close, parents and kids start to think about the inevitable return to school. But after about two months of lazy summer days, getting back into a routine can be a challenge. To make the transition easier for parents and kids, here are some back-to-school tips.

## ○ Start a routine early

Even before the first week of school, try getting everyone back into a routine. Set the alarm clocks and get up at the same time you would on school days. Start a family calendar, mark the first day of school on it, and allow the kids to cross off the days. You can also practice getting to the bus on time or taking a walk to school, so your kids get familiar with the path. As much as they'll groan, eliminate the late nights and return to a more regular bedtime routine.

## ○ Get supplies

Back-to-school shopping sales usually start by August, which gives you plenty of time to buy all the supplies your kids will need. Ask your school for the class supply list, so you don't overlook anything. Consider making shopping a family event. Allowing your kids to pick out some special school tools can get them excited rather than anxious for the big day.

## ○ Become acquainted with the new school

If your kids are in a new environment for school this year, try to get them comfortable by taking a tour. It can also be helpful to ask to meet the new teacher so that your child recognizes a familiar face on the first day.

## ○ Make a lunch plan

Learning is complex on an empty stomach. It is essential to discuss healthy lunch and snack options with your child. Perhaps they have a favourite fruit or vegetable you can stock up on. Planning lunches ahead of time can make school days less hectic. Consider writing out a meal plan for the week to make things easier. If you don't pack lunches for your child but allow them to buy food from the school cafeteria, check out the menu so you can identify some healthy options for your child.

## ○ Find a school partner

If your child travels to school on their own, consider helping them find a school partner. Are there any children in your neighbourhood that can walk or ride the bus with your child? Talk to parents in your area to see how they feel about partnering their children with yours. These situations can also lead to great friendships. The kids will have fun on the way to class and help each other overcome their back-to-school worries.

## ○ Set up a homework schedule

Your child will need to do homework to grasp the concepts taught in class. Be sure to discuss with your child the importance of their work. Find a good spot in your home where they can focus and have no distractions. It may also be essential to set clear boundaries about screen time to help them get the work done.

## ○ Open communication

Your kids may have expectations about what it will look like to return to school. Make time to talk with them about their plans, goals, and feelings. Encourage them to continue to speak with you about what they are looking forward to and any anxious feelings they have. Let them know other kids will feel the same, and they can always look to their teachers to help them settle in.

## ○ Have childcare setup

It is important to line up your child care before school begins. Whether your kids will be going to their grandparents, daycare, before or after school care, or with another trusted adult, be sure they know what to expect. It is also good to go over the rules and reinforce the importance of listening to the grown-ups who care for them after school.



Getting back into a school routine may feel like a challenge after so much time off, but the sooner you put a plan in place, the easier it will be to get back to school.

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