



# *Family* Working



# FamilyWorking

## Transforming the COVID-19 crisis in the opportunity to revolutionize work

### 1. Executive Summary

Within a matter of weeks, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted social interaction, and with it economic activity, globally. It is a crisis of unprecedented scope and depth, and the dual recognition is surfacing that the recovery will be slow and may result in a very different economic reality from the one that entered the crisis.

Management teams globally face the need to redesign organizations in order to preserve essential processes during the acute phase of the crisis and set the basis to emerge stronger once a vaccine has been found or herd immunity achieved.

One of the most striking organizational implications of social distancing is the need for millions of office employees to work from home, while at the same time caring for children prevented from physically attending school. In countries like Italy, where intense intergenerational interaction is the norm, scientific uncertainty over the potential of pupils to spread the virus is imposing a particularly cautious approach to the re-opening of schools. The forced metamorphosis of homes into work and teaching places may therefore last for several weeks or months more, making it imperative to design work arrangements that are sustainable for family life. On the other hand, the unprecedented amount of time spent by

parents at home with children represents a unique opportunity for family empowerment.

The pandemic hit the economy at a time when a trend towards more flexible and decentralized work arrangements had already clearly emerged. It is therefore obvious to see the crisis as a catalyst for a radical rethinking of the workspace, working practices, and the broader boundaries between work, family and leisure. A catalyst for the exploration of new models designed to maximize employees' personal fulfilment and ultimately, from the perspective of the employer, enhance team performance and productivity well beyond the horizon of the pandemic.

With this purpose in mind, ENGIE Eps has designed **FamilyWorking, a radical rethinking of the "Work From Home" concept**, resetting the boundaries between work and family, with the ambition to establish a permanent new model. This White Paper summarises the results of a study performed by ENGIE Eps management, with the support of a multi-disciplinary team of psychologists, sociologists and management scientists.

The work started from an inquiry on the key behavioural recommendations from leading scientists and practitioners to teams and individual employees faced with the daunting task of reinventing interaction during the pandemic, in order to identify the key

enablers that the employer has to guarantee for behaviours to translate into workers' fulfilment and teams' performance.

The overarching aim of **FamilyWorking** is indeed to **establish the structural enablers for employees to elect to work from home**, if given the choice between home and office as default work location. Ultimately, with the implementation of such enablers, for most employees there would be no reason to revert to daily office commuting once social distancing measures are lifted and children return to school. Nevertheless, the option to commute would remain available to those employees willing to.

## 2. FamilyWorking Manifesto

The extended inquiry of the behavioural recommendations aimed at a fulfilling and productive "Work from Home experience", and the key enablers under the employer's responsibility (equipment provision, working policies, parental and wellbeing support, etc.) have been rationalized by ENGIE Eps to frame five rights, comprising the new **FamilyWorking** manifesto.

Under this new and revolutionary perspective, **working physically in an office is no more an obligation but a right recognizing as a new working place the employee's home**. Every employee should choose, when the position allows it, how to better manage tasks and responsibilities. Needless to say, certain roles related to industrial activities are impossible to be shifted to the remote working proposal because of the very nature of the job.

**FamilyWorking** puts at the centre the family as a main principle to achieve the employee's balance between work and family life. ENGIE Eps believes it is the employer's responsibility and interest to guarantee their fulfilment, while benefiting from workers' increased motivation and performance.

The enabling factors of **FamilyWorking** were grouped in five areas, defining the content of **five new rights**:

1. **To Technology**: identification of the set of technology tools required to maximize personal fulfilment on one side, and performance and productivity on the other side.
2. **To Flexibility**: tailoring of the actual work schedule to reflect personal and family needs, as well as constraints such as workspace availability.
3. **To Family**: disconnection policies allowing the employees a neat differentiation between working and family time.
4. **To Wellness**: employees' wellness as explicit objective of resource development, envisaging training sessions, performance assessment and inclusion in remuneration structure.
5. **To Be Parent**: pedagogic support to help the employees in growing their children and favour the establishment of family communities to share educational practices and experiences.

While some of the enabling factors are specifically conceived to overcome social distancing during the pandemic,

**FamilyWorking** is designed to **outlive the current crisis and set the basis for an innovative, comprehensive model of workplace, teamwork and work-life balance**.

### 3. FamilyWorking Rights Articulation

ENGIE Eps has decided to articulate such rights for its employees in the following way:

#### (I) To Technology

The right to Technology implies the provision to the right infrastructure to ensure that every employee has full access to technology, and no-one is left behind. While it is still expected a high level of productivity as pre-emergency times, it is certain the access to the right tools is fundamental to achieve these expectations. Companies must ensure that everyone has access to a steady internet connection, a device, and any other additional software or hardware needed.

ENGIE Eps will provide **to each employee with a professional workstation, comprising a HD screen, ergonomic chair, HD webcam and contribution to a broadband Wi-Fi subscription.**

There are many available tools to generate interaction when remote working. ENGIE Eps recognizes as the main tools to be used by its employees:

- i. **TEAMS:** (1) one-to-one videocalls with colleagues, up to maximum 4 participants, to guarantee constant video contact and (2) collaborative document management and project documents repository (through its integration with SharePoint).
- ii. **ZOOM:** for virtual meetings and videocalls with more than 5 participants.
- iii. **Mail:** in principle for formal interactions with customers and external stakeholders only. With colleagues, just to share important or confidential information.
- iv. **Telegram:** for instant messaging, sharing information, articles, public documents. Never for sharing project documents nor to take any kind of decision.
- v. **Cell phone:** for customers and external stakeholders only.
- vi. **Yammer:** the official internal communication channel.
- vii. **SharePoint intranet pages:** our internal Bulletin Board and official documents and templates repository.

It is relevant to set updated guidelines on how to manage the new social virtual environment where work-relations develop. The proper use of virtual meetings technologies has as main objectives avoiding isolation and dehumanizing feelings and reducing the distances. Considering the new working environment, ENGIE Eps established the following recommendations:

- a) **Video calls replace phone calls in remote communication** to maintain constant visual contact as it activates the mirror neurons and increases affinity
- b) **Availability in all employees' electronic calendars will be shared by default:** updating the calendar regularly is vital to understand the availability of colleagues and manage the time efficiently.
- c) **Setting realistic goals** on what can be accomplish daily.
- d) **Always turn the camera and microphone on.**
- e) **Maintain regular light talking before starting a meeting.**
- f) **Organize a daily stand-up** (even if there is no relevant update) to maintain

transparency, sense of affinity and inclusion with the team.

- g) **Do not alienate** by having the after-meeting coffee chit-chat after work on videocall.
- h) **Kill mute modality** unless family conditions, space cohabitation and urgent matters require otherwise.
- i) **Ban multitasking** and focus on the meeting at hand never losing the opportunity to be an active participant.

When possible, having a place dedicated as a workstation is highly advisable in order to mentally separate the “working space” from the “personal space”. While being in the office means working from a specially designed space that considers body positioning and safety, working from home may change these carefully thought conditions.

While providing the same tools used in the physical office, ENGIE Eps also provides

some specific recommendations when setting up the workstation at home:

- a) **When assessing the workstation**, set up the chair to get a healthy posture in order to achieve a comfortable position.
- b) An **ideal seated position** is one that allows feet to rest on the floor while pelvis and lower back fit comfortably against the back of the chair.
- c) When **positioning the screen**, the top of the computer monitor should be at eye level so that the gaze is slightly down toward the centre of the screen.
- d) A **correct position of the screen** will prevent the neck from straining, and help preventing dry eyes, headaches, and blurred vision.
- e) **Vary the position often** throughout the day.
- f) **Rotate job tasks** to avoid constant keyboard work.
- g) Take frequent, **short breaks** to get up and **move around**.

If your new office is your home, then it must be well-equipped for work

2 High Definition tools for video calling



Infographic 1: Right to Technology

## (II) To Flexibility

In the pre- COVID working era, the flexibility of our work had to be defined within where, how and when we could do the remote working. Workplace flexibility arrangements, which should recognise and realise the needs of both employers and employees, are expected and conducted in order to create a win-win working relationship for both parties; but since January 2020 workspaces and workplaces have completely changed their definitions, while both employers and employees are travelling in unexplored territories of the continuous undergoing challenge of how to achieve a healthy work-life balance.

While remote working flexibilities until yesterday were purely voluntary

arrangements, after COVID-19 it is becoming demanding and a must have while the office presence has become optional. And although it may seem that smart working, remote working was one of the most sought out solutions for balancing personal-work life, these past months have proved that it is not all peaches and dandelions.

The study conducted in the past weeks, which has taken also an assessment on the employees' general perception of the advantages and disadvantages that the new balance of remote working has entailed, has identified the following fears and situations largely perceived within the employees:

- The fear of living in a continuous flat cycle within the same space with no transition phase where you can't

differentiate between “home you” and “work you”.

- Overwhelming feeling of not being able to handle working agenda, personal & family time, home schooling all the while working from home.
- Lack of sensitivity when scheduling engagements and using the whole 24 hours only for work, without prioritizing the tasks.
- The underlying thought of the possibility of contacting colleagues at any time without priorly trying to understand the topic at hand, just because they are working from home and they should be available.

ENGIE Eps has identified practical solutions to these fears and concrete problems by introducing a new scheduling policy offering ample flexibility in work organization:

- a) **The daily 8-hour working time can be freely allocated up to 8:00 PM**, based on family and wellbeing requirements and constraints. The personal schedule shall be shared by all employees with their colleagues via the digital calendar tool, and colleagues shall be bound to respect the stated period of availability / unavailability.
- b) **Employees with children or taking care of a family member**, shall be entitled to temporarily reduce their working time, declaring monthly the number of hours they will be able to accomplish. Monthly compensation shall be automatically and proportionally adjusted. Such arrangement shall de facto represent an **on-demand, flexible part-time scheme**, modifiable on a monthly basis.



Your working hours are defined by your needs

2 Thanks to the flexible part-time you can temporarily reduce your working hours



1 With the help of the **electronical calendar**, you will notify your team how you will distribute your working hours and "private" slots

Infographic 2: Right to Flexibility

### (III) To Family

ENGIE Eps understands and promotes that personal and family time should be part of the day schedule and not something saved for the end of the day.

It is known that remote working is an effective way to help balancing both personal and professional life by working from home if the day schedule is organized in a smart way. During Coronavirus times, when social distancing and home schooling is mandatory, working from home faces new challenges for both workers and organizations.

ENGIE Eps recognizes the importance of a balanced personal life for both employees with children and single and for those who are taking care of their elders.

Putting a limit on the expected time availability is vital to help setting healthy boundaries and to avoid burnout feelings. Realizing that colleagues are not necessarily available because they are at home will generate the much-needed limits that seem blurry during these critical times.

ENGIE Eps has taken two tangible measures regarding the matter:

- a) **Work calls should be conducted only from the workstation:** constraining work calls to the workstation contributes to create a neat distinction between working activities and personal routines.
- b) **Use of the mobile video-conferencing app shall not be allowed from home.**
- c) Sending **emails or instant messages work related is interrupted after 8:00**

**PM.** Screen pop-ups will help enforcing such time boundaries.

Transitions from work mode to personal mode are essential to improve personal and family life's quality. Making an especially intentional effort on these transitions when working from home is essential considering

the natural change of context is not there anymore. By scheduling the time availability in the daily calendar, shared to all colleagues to know and respect dedicated working hours, and by not allowing any kind of contact outside these time slots, ENGIE Eps promotes a more balanced remote work experience.

If your new office is your home, then it must be well-equipped for work

**2** High Definition tools for video calling



Infographic 3: Right to Family

#### (IV) To Wellness

While juggling between the work and personal routine from home and taking care of every single task within our schedule, we tend to forget to take care of ourselves and overlook some really important signals our body is sending to us.

They call it smart working, but unfortunately there is nothing smart or agile in our backpain because our chairs, sofas and

armchairs at home are not designed to accommodate our needs of working for such a prolonged time from home. Using improvised working stations every day can trigger a whole series of symptoms and ailments that can go from acute and occasional to chronic in a nick of time.

The main problem remains the absence of a desk and an ergonomic chair, as well as the lack of useful aids for maintaining correct posture (which ENGIE Eps will provide for

each of its employees), but apart from ergonomic posture, sedentary behaviour and low (or in most of cases non-existent) levels of physical activities will have in the long run a 360 degree negative effect on the well-being and quality of life by increasing stress levels and thus challenging directly the overall mental health.

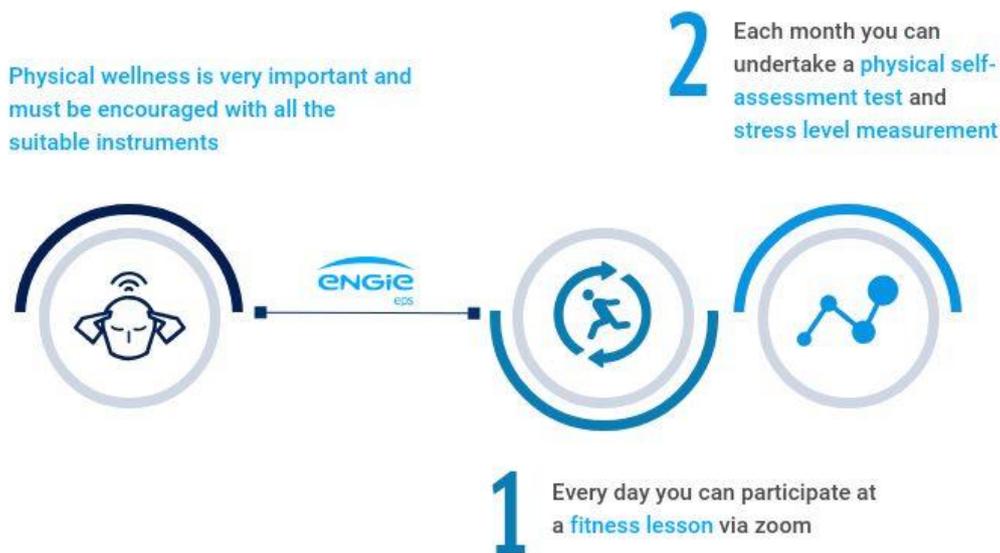
The excuses that you need a well-equipped spacious environment for gym or fitness exercises, are not reliable. The World Health Organization in its latest papers has recommended at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week, which not only reduces all the aforementioned problems, but it can also help divert attention from the continuous pit-stop towards refrigerator and pantry.

Having identified in our study one of the most prevalent fear is being unable to break this unhealthy loop that could overpower all of us and in order to establish an active and balanced routine, ENGIE Eps set up a [partnership with PhysioTechLab and Fabrizio](#)

[Macchi](#), ENGIE Eps spokesperson and Paralympic athlete with 29 Italian championships, 4 European medals, 15 world medals, including 2 golds and bronze at the 2004 Athens Games.

ENGIE Eps will help its employees to maintain a healthy lifestyle by putting in place the following measures for its employees:

- a) [Organizing everyday a personal trainer supported exercise session via Zoom](#), open to family members. As an incentive, [20% of the variable compensation shall be awarded based on the attendance](#) to such sessions.
- b) [The possibility to submit to Home M.e.a.sure](#), the innovative [self-assessment test of your physical state](#) developed by PhysioTechLab and the [stress level measurement](#) that ENGIE Eps is implementing. It is the company's firm belief that Wellness should be not left behind in order to work more efficiently.



Infographic 4: Right to Wellness

## (V) To Be Parent

Many working parents feel the pressure to demonstrate that they are just as career driven as they were before the Coronavirus crisis began or even more, before they had kids.

Working parents face many obstacles when during working hours school day is also taking place. For instance, trying to integrate the children's homework, conference calls (for all the family), breaks, eating times, managing the household (from cooking to laundry, to cleaning to grocery shopping) on the same day could be discouraging.

Frustration, anxiety, harsh self-criticism for mistakes both at workplace and at home as well as intrusive overthinking can take place.

The crisis and the reality of working from home for an extended period can provoke anxiety in most people. Understanding each other's key concerns is critical, it makes everybody more attentive and sensitive. Adapting to the partner and family's needs demonstrate the goodwill and love we'll all need to make it through these times.

By partnering with La Locomotiva di Momo nursery-school, an educational excellence in Milan for 25 years inspired and successfully practicing the Reggio *approach*, ENGIE Eps, will provide a range of tools to promote a better parenthood:

- a) **Weekly webinars with a pedagogue** to improve children's growth path. Adult discussion rooms will be led by

experienced pedagogues on issues regarding growth and specific subjects emerged as a consequence of the COVID-19 emergency: children's exposure to screens, children's bonding experience, autonomy management, quality of learning within the home walls and frustration for lack of social relationships between peers.

- b) **A proposal of activities called "challenge" to be held three times a week for children from 0 to 11 years old**, to help sharing time with children and grow together. The objective of the challenge is to involve children by launching very open provocations and therefore easy understandable by children and parents. The challenges will always include the use of materials already present in the house (like recycling materials) or involve children

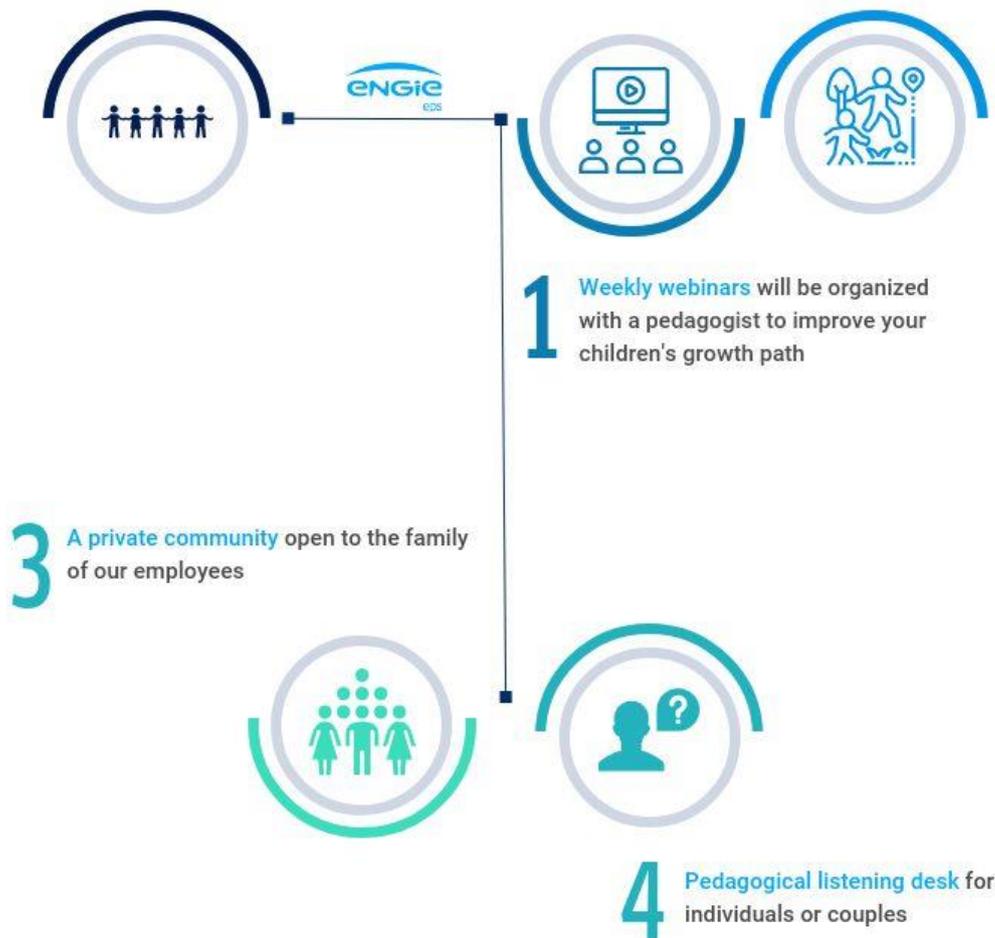
in explorations that will lead them to have a new look on their home. In general, challenges stimulate children and adults to enhance their ability to look at objects in an unusual way, opening possibilities for discovery and generating intellectual, artistic and motor activation.

- c) **A confidential community**, open to the family of our employees, to share with the families of colleagues the activities carried out with children, images, videos and drawings.
- d) **Individual or couple pedagogical listening desk**, which can be activated on request, conducted by a pedagogue, with the purpose of supporting the critical issues that emerged from the management of children, rules, time and family relationships.



High quality instruments and contents must be guaranteed in order to sustain your parental path

**2** "Challenge": a new proposal of activities for children from 0 to 11 years old, thrice a week



Infographic 5: Right to Be Parent

In ENGIE Eps' ambition, **FamilyWorking** should encourage employees to elect to work from home, even if given the choice between home and office as default work location. If successful, **FamilyWorking** would

establish a new work model to apply well beyond the horizon of the COVID-19 emergency, turning an unprecedented crisis into an opportunity to revolutionize work.

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