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Having a *BABY and* WORKING from home during COVID

For most of us, the pandemic has been a time of change. Many switched to working from home with little or no notice; we were mandated to stay inside for most of the day and could not see the friends and family we rely on for support. But for three of the attorneys at McKinney, Bancroft & Hughes, there was an extra challenge in the form of a new baby.

Erin M Hill, Andrew C D Smith and Kimberley A Rolle explain what it was like to welcome a new addition to the family while living and working through a pandemic.

Erin M Hill

Erin's son Adam was born in May, 2020 with her husband on video call for the birth, as mothers-to-be were required to go through labour and delivery alone at that point. While it wasn't what either of them had expected in the previous months, and wearing a mask during the whole process was difficult, Erin says that her medical team were wonderful. 'The hospital staff, the doctors, the midwives, the nurses, the patient care technicians, they were all fabulous. They all did a great job of keeping everybody as safe as possible.'

When they took Adam home the next day, they didn't go home to the usual throng of friends, aunts, siblings and cousins that might normally have been coming around to help out and hold the baby for a while so that she could have a moment to herself. Lockdowns meant that they were alone for the months that followed, with the exception of an occasional visit from her parents.

When Erin's maternity leave ended, they found an in-home carer to look after Adam while she returned to work. With homeworking still compulsory, Erin found benefits in being

around more. While she still has a strict routine, she is able to spend her lunch breaks with her baby. She has also made sure that his routine means he can stay up a little later in the evenings to spend time with her and her husband, who is also an attorney.

The initial transition to home working was made easier by the fact that the firm had made a big push in previous years to ensure that as much work as possible could be done electronically. This meant that the switch to being at home at the start of lockdown was as smooth as it could have been.

The firm have also been particularly understanding of the situation. 'They have been great, I can't stress that enough. It's been a blessing working for them while having a baby during the pandemic. I felt as though my employer understood that the safety and wellbeing of my baby was the most important thing to me. Even though the country has started to open up, I haven't felt pressured to go back right away. If there is something that I can do virtually, I am allowed to do it virtually.'

'I have always felt absolutely supported. They check in all the time. It's a great working environment and it's refreshing

to work for an employer who you feel genuinely cares.'

Her tips for working attorneys who are expecting babies are firstly to put as much in order as you can before you leave. She created a master schedule of all of her files and their status before giving different attorneys responsibility for them and introducing them to her clients. This meant that during her maternity leave, although the emails still came in, she was confident that they were being handled and that she wouldn't have to work during such a sacred time.

Once the baby is born, Erin advocates creating a schedule that works for you. She works well at night, so she goes back to work once Adam is asleep to finish the day's tasks.

Erin M Hill is an associate of the firm well-versed in a range of practice areas, including banking and finance, corporate and commercial litigation, and trusts/private client litigation. She is an Affiliate Member of STEP Bahamas. Erin is fluent in Spanish which is vital to assist with clients from Spanish speaking countries. She is also an ADRgroup Accredited Civil and Commercial Mediator. Email: emhill@mckinney.com.bs.

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