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## Life & Arts -- Work & Family Mailbox: Hope for Older Telecommuters

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Q: I enjoyed your 2018 article on how older workers can keep pace with job-market changes. How about an update on the outlook for working from home for older workers?

-- J.S.

A: The outlook is bright. The work-at-home population is already skewed toward older workers, and telecommuters over 50 are likely to continue to grow as the workforce ages. Workers over 45 make up half of all telecommuters, but only 41% of the total workforce, according to a 2017 analysis of census data by FlexJobs, a site that vets flexible work opportunities, and Global Workplace Analytics, a research and consulting firm.

Employers are stepping up efforts to retain older workers amid continuing labor shortages, and letting them work from home is an important retention tool, says Kate Lister, president of Global Workplace Analytics. Workers over 64 are 1.7 times as likely to work from home than at an employer's office or worksite, the study shows.

Telecommuting increased 115% in the past decade, the study shows, and the growth is likely to continue as long as the economy stays healthy. Common occupations for older people who work from home include financial adviser, accountant, writer, editor, customer-service worker, interpreter and tutor, a FlexJobs analysis shows.

Q: I saw your March 26 column about the value of a vacation mind-set on the weekends. I have three grandchildren under 9. How can I find inexpensive but enjoyable weekend outings to take with them?

-- T.H.

A: Talk to your grandchildren first and be guided their passions, from baseball or dinosaurs to zoos or train rides, says **Eileen Ogintz**, an author and founder of Taking the Kids, a website on family travel. Simply taking a train or bus into the city can be exciting for children. Check your city's tourism website for tips on new museum exhibits, children's theater or concerts. If you visit a large zoo or museum, take a virtual tour online with your grandchildren first to pick target exhibits.

Many national parks hold special events for families in the spring, including hikes or activities with park rangers. Fourth-graders can apply online for passes for free admission. To introduce your grandchildren to rural life or plan a fruit-picking expedition, check the websites of U-Pick Farm Locator or Pick Your Own to find farms that welcome family visitors. To find short, easy hikes in your area, AllTrails is a helpful app. Bring binoculars if you have them, for watching birds or gazing at the horizon. Remember that everything with children takes longer than you expect, Ms. Ogintz says. And be prepared to depart from your plans and quit when your grandchildren have had enough.

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