

A Guide for Supporting Families During COVID19

“Young children are going to remember how their family felt during this Coronavirus panic, more than anything specific about the virus. Our kids are watching and learning about how to respond to stress and uncertainty. Let’s wire our kids with resilience, not panic.” – Kelly’s Treehouse

Top tips:

- It is important to follow Government advice on social distancing and isolation. This has been put in place to protect everyone and stop the spread of COVID19.
- Some children and young people will feel safer and more secure by staying in a routine. Create one on paper so they know what to expect and keep this generic throughout the week.
- The calmer adults are, the calmer children and young people will be and the easier day to day life will be. The more heightened adults’ energy becomes the more the behaviour of children and young people will escalate.
- Use educational resources to give children and young people some mental stimulation, a lot of providers are making these resources free now. Schedule this into their routine.
- Limit screen time. Guidance shows that no child or young person should need more than 2 hours screen time per day. This could be broken up into two 1 hour slots, four 30 minute slots, etc. If children and young people aren’t asking for screen time, do not make them.
- Try doing some relaxation exercises together - mindfulness, yoga, etc.
- Wearing children and young people out mentally and physically is going to help them sleep.
- Children are going to be frustrated and confused during this time and will not be able to understand as much as adults, even though it is a frustrating and confusing time for us too! Explain things to them as much as possible at an age appropriate level. It’s important for them to stay calm. This article by Parenting Today may help:
https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/coronavirus/helping-parents-and-kids-stay-cool-and-collected-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/?utm_campaign=Ideas%20to%20Keep%20Kids%20and%20Teens%20Busy%20While%20Homebound%20%28PjQsGu%29&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Active%20Users%20Last%203%20Months&_ke=eyJrbF9lbWFpbCI6ICJic2F1bmRlcnNAZWRR1Yy5zb21lcnNldC5nb3YudWsiLCAia2xfY29tcGFueV9pZCI6ICJKUGZaazQifQ%3D%3D#gs.1nbn9n
- Not all learning is done in the classroom – use this time to teach children and young people how to cook, bake, fix things, do laundry, sew on a button, etc.
- We understand that gaming is a big part of some children and young people’s lives these days, however it’s important this is limited and that they do not stay up into the early hours of the morning gaming. Provide limits and a clear cut off time to support them in not becoming nocturnal.

Routine:

Some children will enjoy keeping a routine. Here's an idea of one that we found as a guide but you can create your own to suit your family's needs:

Before 09:00	Wake up	Eat breakfast, make your bed, get dressed
09:00-10:00	Morning walk	Family walk
10:00-11:00	Academic time	NO ELECTRONICS Work set by school, sudoku, flash cards, crosswords, word searches
11:00-12:00	Creative time	Lego, drawing, arts and crafts, music, cooking, baking
12:00	Lunch	Eat together
12:30	Chore time	Clear kitchen table, dusting, tidying, laundry, polishing
13:00-14:30	Quiet time	Reading, puzzles, take a nap if needed
14:30-16:00	Academic time	ELECTRONICS OK FOR A SHORT TIME Work set by school, sudoku, flash cards, crosswords, word searches, educational apps and games
16:00-17:00	Fresh air	Time in the garden
17:00-18:00	Dinner	Eat together
18:00-20:00	Bedtime routine	Clear up after dinner, bath, story time, bed

This will depend on your family's needs and circumstances as there is no one routine that will work for every family. Also, some schools are setting work for each lesson of the day, which will help children and young people stay in a routine.

Age appropriate technology:

18 months and younger	No screen time at all, except for video chatting.
18-24 months	High-quality programming/educational apps only for no longer than 10 minutes. Parents should watch with their children to help them understand what they're seeing.
2-5 years	High quality programming/educational apps only for no longer than an hour a day. Parents should watch with their children to help them understand what they're seeing and apply it to the world around them.

6 years and older

No more than two hours media per day. Consistent limits should be set on time spent on media, types of media, and ensuring media does not take the place of adequate sleep, physical activity, and other things essential to good health.

Messy play ideas:

Drip Paint Art



A great abstract art technique is to go full-on Jackson Pollock and do drip paint art.

Put down a plastic table cloth or cut a garbage bag open and tape it to the table to protect the surface.

Put a few different colours of paint in small separate containers. You can use empty yogurt or applesauce containers, jam jars or cans.

Add a bit of water to the paint containers. You can play around with consistency here – you just want it runny enough to pour easily, but still thick enough to control.

Use a brush or pour from a cup or an empty squeeze bottle to drip the paint over the paper to create designs. The random act of dripping paint into swirly designs allows our minds to relax and concentrate on colour, form and pattern, rather than what is happening in the world around us right at this instant.

Make Your Own Scratch Art



This activity involves some scribbling, a lot of colouring and a little bit of painting.

Grab a piece of paper and colour the entire piece with crayons, making patches of different colours and pressing hard with the crayons to get a nice saturated hue.

After you finish the first layer, cover your work with a layer of black or dark blue tempera or acrylic paint.

Then, once the black paint dries, use a toothpick or the end of a paint brush to scratch away some of the darker colour to reveal the coloured paper underneath.

Colouring Mandalas

Simply colouring a picture is one of the best stress relievers around. For a fast and easy activity, dig out any colouring books you have around the house, and get colouring.

No colouring books? Filled them all in already? There are free colouring pages available to print off the Internet.

But for maximum enjoyment and effect, create your own colouring page.

You've probably seen colourful mandalas; there are colouring books filled with them and you can also print them off the Internet. But you can easily make your own.

Here's how:



Start in the middle of a piece of paper and draw a shape: a circle, a heart, a triangle, whatever you like. Then draw some more shapes around it. You can use images on Pinterest for inspiration, but really, all you need to do is keep drawing different shapes and lines, circles, ovals, tear drops, leaves, flowers, etc, radiating out from the centre design.

When you've finished, you can either colour in your shapes, or trade your design with a family member so that everyone colours in someone else's mandala.

Paper Pinwheel

There's something soothing about cutting and folding paper. Making a paper pinwheel combines a focus of attention, the relaxation of a simple craft and the end-result satisfaction of a completed craft. All serve to get your mind off any immediate worries.



To make a paper pinwheel, cut a square out of a colourful piece of paper. Then cut in from the corners toward the centre, and fold four of the corners in.

When you have a finished pinwheel, embellish it however you like. You can glue the edges in place and affix faux gems in the centre for decoration, you can poke holes in the centre and corner dots and use

a brad to attach everything or you can use a push pin to attach the edges and then push the pin into wooden dowel for a pinwheel that spins.

Home-made Playdough

The squishy, tactile feel of playdough between your fingers is guaranteed to lower your heartbeat and sooth your stress for a little while. It's a home-made stress ball.



You can also get out your cookie cutters and make shapes, make pinch pots or make a family of worms by rolling your dough into cylinders.

There are lots of recipes on the internet for making homemade playdough.

Once you've made your dough, you can squish it, roll it or cut it with cookie cutters.

Or you can turn this into a sneaky teachable moment by making a Playdough pulse meter and measuring your heart rate. Have the kids do a few jumping jacks and then use the pulse meter to measure their heart rate. Next, have them take some deep breaths and lower their pulse. (Fun and learning together – every parent's dream activity).

Sensory Bag

Finally, here is one last craft that isn't so much an art activity, but it's a great way to end your day or to grab when things seem overwhelming. Make a sensory bag!

Similar to a stress ball or playdough, a sensory bag provides that soothing tactile sensation that encourages a calming, meditative state.



You will need a zip-close bag and some duct tape to ensure your bag is securely sealed. Then find some squishy things to put inside. One option is to use hair gel, or you can mix together some cooking oil, water and food colouring. A third option is to use finger paints.

Pour your ingredients into the bag, seal the bag and squish. Take some deep breaths as you do: breathe in for a count of four, and out for a count of four. Do this four times.


There are lots of other arts and crafts ideas online too! Pinterest is a free app to download and has a wealth of activities to try.

30 day Lego challenge:



30 Day LEGO Challenge

Follow the instructions for each day. The only rule is to have fun and use your imagination!

Day 1		Day 2		Day 3		Day 4	
You were hired by an amusement park to create a new roller coaster.		NASA needs you to build a new rocket.		Your parents want to build a new home and they want you to build it.		Hollywood hires you to build a movie set for a new Star Wars movie.	
Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	
You enter a contest to build the world's tallest tower. Will you win?	You are stuck on Mars and need to build a new ship to get home.	Ford hires you to create the toughest pick up truck in the world.	You and 4 friends are stranded on an island. Build a boat to find a way home.	Captain Hook needs a new pirate ship and wants you to build it.	You and your friends decide to build a tree house.	Prince Charming hires you to build a castle for him & Cinderella.	
Day 12	Day 13	Day 14	Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	
Dr. Who hires you to build a new TARDIS.	You are asked by the President to build a new monument to George Washington.	Mr. Hilton hires you to build a new hotel.	There is a circus in town. Build a place for the performance.	Help your fellow pioneers build a wagon to make it across the country.	Build the fastest car around and join the big car race.	Do you wanna build a snowman? Get in the winter mood and build a snow scene.	
Day 19	Day 20	Day 21	Day 22	Day 23	Day 24	Day 25	
The city wants you to build a bridge to connect one side of the town to the other.	Pizza party! It is up to you to make a pizza for all the guests.	You are hired to build a brand new hospital.	The fence is broke and the dog keeps escaping. Build one he can't get out of.	You are now in medieval times. You are commissioned to build a jousting arena.	The local bank keeps getting robbed. Build a safe no one can crack.	Design and build your dream bedroom.	
Day 26	Day 27	Day 28	Day 29	Day 30			What was your favorite day?
You are elected ruler. Build a flag for your land.	Aliens are invading and you need to build a war robot to defeat them.	The aliens have taken over. They are impressed by your robot. They want you build one for them.	You are hired to build a house entirely out of yellow Legos.	There is blizzard. You will need to build a snowmobile.			

Other ideas to stay entertained:

- Growing vegetables and/or flowers in pots from seeds.
- Treasure hunts – hide things around the house and give clues to find something special at the end of the hunt.
- Play eye-spy or ear-hear.
- Pebble painting.
- Create a mud or water kitchen.
- 'Paint' the fence with water.
- Create snow globes.
- Scouts, The Great Indoors - <https://www.scouts.org.uk/the-great-indoors/>
- Bake cakes or biscuits and decorate them.
- Write in a journal or diary.
- Change4Life, Indoor games - <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/indoor-activities>
- Childhood 101 website - <https://childhood101.com/>