

TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT COVID-19

- ✓ Start by finding out what they already know about the situation
- ✓ Encourage your children to ask questions
- ✓ Use reliable resources, like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO), to get the most accurate information. Visit their websites:
<https://www.cdc.gov>
<https://www.who.int>
- ✓ Limit your child's exposure to media that may cause fear or discrimination toward others
- ✓ Use age-appropriate explanations and images
- ✓ Help your child express how they are feeling and validate their emotions
- ✓ While it's important to be honest, try to make the situation feel less scary by reassuring your child that you're there to keep them safe and healthy
- ✓ Be patient if they aren't ready to talk about the situation
- ✓ Check back in with your children on a regular basis and make yourself available to them

SOCIAL STORIES

are designed to support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities.

The goal of a social story is to visually and verbally detail specific situations from a wide variety of topics in order to increase awareness and understanding of social norms.

Creating a social story with your child may be another helpful way to talk through this challenging time.

REFERENCES:

1. Griffin, D. A. (2020, March 6). Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019. Retrieved March 23, 2020, from <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-caregiver-guide-to-helping-families-cope-with-the-coronavirus-disease-2019> 2. Social Narratives Support Individuals with Autism. (2017, October 26). Retrieved March 23, 2020, from <https://www.autismsociety-nc.org/social-narratives-guidelines/> 3. Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus): A Parent Resource. (n.d.). Retrieved March 23, 2020, from <https://www.nasonline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

ESTABLISHING NEW ROUTINES

TO GIVE YOUR CHILDREN A SENSE OF NORMALCY, IT'S IMPORTANT TO
KEEP UP WITH ALREADY ESTABLISHED ROUTINES.

IF YOU DON'T CURRENTLY HAVE A ROUTINE AND WOULD LIKE TO START
ONE, HERE ARE SOME TIPS FROM THE AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY ASSOCIATION THAT CAN HELP GET YOU STARTED!



MORNING ROUTINES

- Keep wake up times as consistent as possible
- Plan and prepare the night before (i.e. pack lunches and backpacks, set out clothing, etc.)
- Have a visual schedule, checklist, or calendar to better prepare older children
- Try to make routines fun and interesting! Play music while getting dressed or offer rewards for good behavior
- It is definitely okay to relax the rules a little bit on weekends and holidays



MEALTIME ROUTINES

- Try to keep mealtimes consistent, and warn your child in advance if there is a change
- Include children in meal planning, setting the table, cleaning up, and even cooking when appropriate to develop life skills
- Encourage healthy eating habits by including rules like no TV or electronics during mealtimes
- Be a role model for your children! Use manners and engage everyone at the table in conversation to promote communication and social growth



BEDTIME ROUTINES

- Pick a bedtime based on your child's age and plan accordingly to fit in a predictable and consistent bedtime routine
- Even an older child should relocate to their room at "bedtime". Encourage them to read in bed if they are not tired
- After some practice with the routine, involve your child more in the process
- Avoid eating, exercising, and using electronics right before bed, instead use calming strategies to prepare them for bed, like playing relaxing music and dimming the lights

NEED HELP AROUND THE HOUSE?

AGE-APPROPRIATE CHORES FOR KIDS

UP TO AGE 3

CLEAN UP TOYS
DUST
TRANSFER LAUNDRY
WIPE DOWN SURFACES
MATCH SOCKS

AGES 4-5

SET/CLEAR TABLE
CARRY GROCERIES
SORT LAUNDRY
HELP COOK MEALS
MAKE BED

AGES 6-8

SWEEP / VACUUM
MAKE SIMPLE MEALS
MAKE BED
FOLD LAUNDRY
WASH THE DISHES

AGES 9 & UP

MAKE MEALS
DO THE LAUNDRY
CLEAN BATHROOMS
MOP THE FLOORS
SUPERVISE SIBLINGS

GENERAL TIPS:



CREATE A SCHEDULE

Establishing routines is important, especially during times of change and unknown, so your child will know what to expect from their day. Post the schedule in an easy-to-see place (fridge, mirror, etc.).



OFFER CHOICES

Choices will give your child a sense of control. Offer 2 options of chores, and let your child choose between the 2, so they feel they are able to pick what they want to do.



MAKE IT FUN!

Making it a challenge, competition, or game can make chores fun for kids so they enjoy doing them. Try using timers or incorporating music into their chores.



USE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Try using a simple reward that is age-appropriate for your child (sticker chart, token system, gets to choose dessert for that night, gets to pick the board game or movie for that night, etc.).

TAKE TIME FOR YOU!

HOW TO RECHARGE AS A CAREGIVER



Stay Healthy: During busy and stressful times, it is important to remember to keep your energy up! Eat meals and snacks throughout the day, take short walks or stretch, and get plenty of sleep.



Go "Off Duty": Set aside some time during the day to do things that YOU enjoy. Whether it be taking a bath, listening to music, or watching an episode of your favorite TV show. You should always make sure to take time for yourself during the day.



Connect with Friends and Family: Don't forget about your social life! Connect on FaceTime, Skype, Facebook, or by phone with people you can't see in person but want to keep in touch with. Exchange resources with each other!



Don't Stress: It can be hard to balance working from home and monitoring your child's school work all the time. Take this time to teach your kids life lessons and know that your child will still succeed!



Express Yourself: Be aware of your emotions and express yourself. Tell others how you feel, keep a journal, or try mindfulness exercises!



HOW TO CREATE AN OPTIMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR SCHOOL AT HOME

✓ Create a Designated Study Space

This Space Should Be:

- Distraction free (low traffic area of the house, separate from siblings, free of technology)
- In a small space (rearrange furniture to achieve an optimal environment)
- In a well-lit room
- Free of clutter

✓ Designate Specific Study Times

- Learn what time of the day your child works best and play to their strengths
- If this time is set by the school make sure they are set up for success
 - Make sure they eat, use the bathroom, and gather all materials prior to beginning

✓ Provide Breaks

Try:

- Going for a walk
- Yoga, meditation, or stretching
- Any physical activity where your child can move (TECHNOLOGY FREE!)

✓ Use Tools to Increase Concentration

- Alternative seating (stability balls, cushions)
- Fidgets (Play-Doh, stress balls, Velcro)
- Noise canceling headphones or white noise

✓ Encourage Proper Positioning

- Sit with feet flat on the ground and back on the backrest
- Head and body should be facing straight
- Neck should not be bent too far down or up (change height of chair if necessary)

✓ Organize a Virtual Study Group

- This is a great way to maintain social interaction with friends while continuing to learn!



Note: All children have different learning preferences and strengths. What works for one child won't work for everyone so it's OK to try multiple strategies until you get it right!



ACTIVITIES FOR SENSORY PLAY



Finger Painting: Get out your favorite paper and paint colors and paint with your fingers!



Slime: Mix 3 tbsp of saline contact solution, 1 tsp baking soda, 8 oz. of liquid glue, and food coloring to make some slippery slime. Add a drop of essential oil to give it a fun scent!



Play-Doh: Create animals, shapes, or food. You can even write your name with it.



Coin Rubbing: Cover coins with a sheet of paper and rub over them with a crayon to create a cool pattern!



Stress Ball: Fill balloons with cornstarch, rice, or flour and tie shut to create your own stress ball.



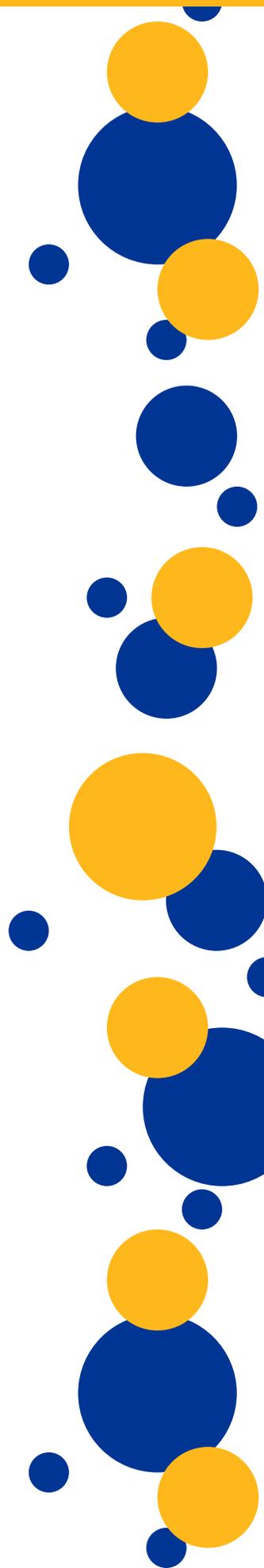
Shaving Cream: Cover your table with plastic wrap and use your fingers to play in shaving cream.



Sand Paper Art: Draw with crayons on sand paper for a funky design.

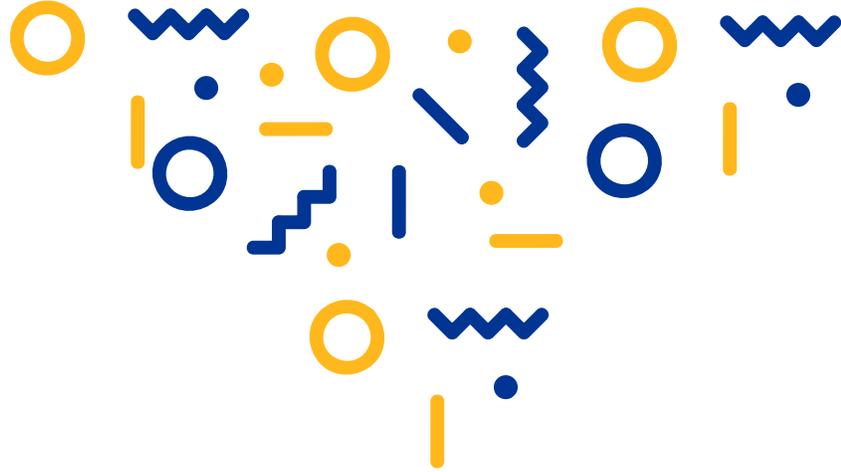


Glitter Bottle: Mix water, glue, glitter, and food coloring in a bottle to personalize a calming glitter bottle.





TEN INDOOR FAMILY FUN ACTIVITIES



- 1 Family Game Tournament**
Have each family member pick a different board game and make it a tournament.
- 2 Karaoke Battle and Dance Party**
Find your favorite songs on YouTube with lyrics.
- 3 Scavenger Hunt**
Hide clues around the house to lead to a treasure.
- 4 At-Home Boot Camp**
Each family member takes turns picking the exercise for your new family workout routine.
- 5 Art Gala Evening**
Create art and display it around the house for a fun evening of meeting the artists and getting to know your new favorite pieces of art.
- 6 Themed Dinner Night**
Work together to create a meal with a theme. Themes could be a country, book, movie, or your family's heritage.
- 7 Camp In Night**
Make a blanket fort to create your tent, go on "hikes" around the house, tell campfire stories, and make s'mores.
- 8 Cooking Show**
Pretend you are on a cooking show to make your favorite sweet treat.
- 9 Express Yourself**
Paint, color, build, create, or journal to express how you feel.
- 10 Comedy Night**
Spend the day coming up with your best jokes. Create a stage and your comedian routine for the night.

TOP TEN ACTIVITIES

FOR FINE MOTOR SKILLS

✓ **PLAY-DOH** Make it easier: Free play, roll into big balls
Make it harder: Roll into small balls using fingertips, make a person / place / thing

✓ **PAINTING** Make it easier: Finger painting
Make it harder: Painting with a Q-tip

✓ **LEGOS** Make it easier: Push legos together / pull apart using whole hand
Make it harder: Push legos together / pull apart using just fingertips

✓ **PUPPETS** Make it easier: Use socks as hand puppets
Make it harder: Make your own finger puppets

✓ **LACING** Make it easier: Cheerios on a string or pipe cleaner
Make it harder: Make jewelry using small beads

✓ **PICTIONARY** Make it easier: Do not use a timer, simple topics for pictures
Make it harder: Use a timer, more complex topics for pictures

✓ **PAPER GAMES** Make it easier: Crumple up newspaper into balls for "paper snowball fight"
Make it harder: Paper airplanes, paper football, fortune teller/cootie catcher
<https://www.squiglyplayhouse.com/ArtsAndCrafts/Crafts/CootieCatchers.html>

✓ **COLLAGE** Make it easier: Ripping paper, using a glue stick
Make it harder: Cutting paper from magazines, etc., using wet glue

✓ **BUILDING** Make it easier: Cup tower
Make it harder: House of cards

✓ **BOARD GAMES**

TOP 10 COMMON GAMES THAT PROMOTE FINE MOTOR SKILLS

1. Connect 4
2. Operation
3. Perfection
4. Puzzles
5. Kerplunk
6. Card Games
7. Dominos
8. Yahtzee
9. Jenga
10. Don't Break the Ice



TOP TEN ACTIVITIES

FOR GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

- ✓ **BALLOON FUN**
Try to keep the balloon off the ground
Or pop all the balloons without using your hands
- ✓ **DANCING**
Turn up the music and learn new dance moves
Or bring back your favorite moves!
- ✓ **MOVE YOUR BODY**
Get to moving and stretch your body
Or use songs to move around like "I'm a Little Teapot" or "The Hokey Pokey"
- ✓ **SIMON SAYS**
Listen up and do as "Simon says"
Or don't complete the move because Simon did not say to
- ✓ **BUILD A FORT**
Use blankets and couch cushions to create a fort
Or recycle boxes to create a fort you can color on
- ✓ **SCAVENGER HUNT**
Create a list and go on a scavenger hunt around your house
Or turn off the lights and use a flashlight to add an extra challenge
- ✓ **YOGA**
Make yoga poses by creating the alphabet with your body
Or move your body to each animal's favorite yoga pose
- ✓ **OBSTACLE COURSE**
Use pillows, chairs, and laundry baskets to create an obstacle course
Or add new movements such as hopping or crawling to get around the house
- ✓ **TAG IT**
Race to touch household items in alphabetical order
Or create riddles to decide what household item you must find
- ✓ **ANIMAL WALKS**
Assign an animal to each room and walk around the room as that animal
Or have animal walk races in the backyard



TEN CALMING ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS



Yoga

Can be used during a break or at night to promote better sleep



Meditation

Use guided meditation or scripts
Take deep breaths for increased benefit



Swinging/Rocking

Use a swing, chair or just your body to rock back and forth



Squeezes

Squeeze hands together, give self a body hug or ask for squeezes from caregiver



Activities on Stomach

Puzzles, games, coloring, etc.



Journal or Draw

Expressing emotions through words or pictures can relieve stress



Blowing Bubbles

Make it a game or competition!



Using Fidgets

Play-Doh/putty, stress balls, bean/pasta bins. Try putting things in the putty or bins for child to dig out!



Build a Blanket Fort

Have child build the fort and then use it as their own personal space to relax



Jumping on a Trampoline

Big jumps up and down can help calm a child's body

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A CAREGIVER?



CHANGES TO THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Have a designated "quiet space"
2. Turn down the lights
3. Noise-canceling headphones
4. Calming music (white noise, nature sounds)
5. Essential oils (lavender, vanilla, rose)

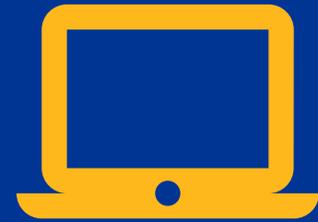
BEST EDUCATIONAL APPS & WEBSITES

FOR CHILDREN

WEBSITES:

[HTTPS://LEARN.KHANACADEMY.ORG/KHAN-ACADEMY-KIDS/](https://learn.khanacademy.org/khan-academy-kids/)
A free online learning resource for kids

[HTTPS://WWW.TYPINGCLUB.COM](https://www.typingclub.com)
Practice touch typing to work on keyboarding skills



APPS:

LETTER SCHOOL: For practicing letter formation

MAD LIBS: For working on differentiating nouns, verbs, and adjectives

FISH SCHOOL: Teach your preschooler letters, shapes, numbers, and more

PHONIC NINJAS: Work through letter sounds and blends

NASA VIZ: Learn about earth, planets, and stars

MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH PLANET: Brush up on important skills like fractions and geometry

TODO MATH: For Pre-K to 2nd grade, complete a daily math challenge

VOCABULARY SPELLING CITY: Practice spelling and vocab words

AWESOME EATS: Teach your kids about healthy eating

DUOLINGO: Learn another language

APPS LIKE BOOKS, GOODREADS, SERIAL BOX, AND

KINDLE: Read a book or listen to an audiobook

BREATHE, THINK, DO WITH SESAME: Teach your child about emotions and staying calm with this app





BEST APPS & WEBSITES

FOR CAREGIVERS

WEBSITES:

[HTTPS://WWW.WHO.INT/EMERGENCIES/DISEASES/NOVEL-CORONAVIRUS-2019](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)

[HTTPS://WWW.CDC.GOV/CORONAVIRUS/2019-NCOV/INDEX.HTML](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

[HTTPS://CHILDMIND.ORG/COPING-DURING-COVID-19-RESOURCES-FOR-PARENTS/](https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/)

APPS:

SAFERKID: SaferKid blocks inappropriate content and increases internet safety

iREWARD: iReward uses positive reinforcement to help your child achieve their goals

CHOREMONSTER: Make chore lists and let your kids earn points for chores completed

FIRST THEN VISUAL SCHEDULE: Create a visual schedule of your child's daily routine

S'MORES UP: Guide you and your kids through daily chores and help keep the house in order

COZI FAMILY ORGANIZER: Schedule you and your family's day and stay on track

DONE: A SIMPLE HABIT TRACKER: Note your healthy & not-so-healthy habits to live a better lifestyle

BABY CONNECT: Track a wide variety of information about your baby that you can share with anyone

TALKSPACE: Connect with a licensed therapist if you are feeling overwhelmed

ARTKIVE: Digitally save your child's artwork and clear up some space at home

YUMMLY: Download this app for a large database of recipes

ALLRECIPIES DINNER SPINNER: Make a different meal every night using this app