

# Supporting Children During Covid-19

## A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN



### Care for your emotions and theirs

Your mental health matters for you and your children. If you are feeling overwhelmed or home life is stressful, remember that asking for help isn't a sign of weakness. Instead, it teaches children the importance of being resourceful. Try to connect with each child every day. Even if it's only for a few minutes, your loving attention fills their hearts. Walk together. Laugh together. Play together. Approach them with an open mind. Acknowledge their concerns, views, and frustrations. Allow children to ask questions and give them honest answers. Reassure children that this will pass.

### Connect with others, at a distance

Make time for celebrating birthdays and holidays — and any other special occasions you invent, like Funday Friday or Pajama Day. Connect with friends and family by phone, text, and video calls. Help children experience the joy of sending and receiving homemade cards. Mail them or drop them off at each other's houses and have children visit with each other from either side of a driveway. Create hopscotch courses on the sidewalk for all to enjoy. Make a poster for the mail carrier. Reach out to elderly, homebound neighbors. Offer to bring them groceries. Chat from porch to porch. This is a wonderful opportunity for children to learn the value of community.





## Stick to routines

Routines help children feel safe and secure. Have children wake up and go to sleep and eat at predictable times everyday. Together, make a loose schedule that includes time for school work, exercise, helping with household chores, and creating art and music. And don't forget everyone's very real need for free time, fresh air, and relaxation. If your routine isn't working, change it. Try more structure or less structure.

## Keep on learning

This is the time for children to develop life skills. Teach them how to repair a broken cup, make grandma's soup, and do the laundry. Read to them, even if they're older, and have them read to you. Teach them a new card game. Encourage them to do their schoolwork, but remember most children struggle to do schoolwork at home, and being a teacher on top of all your other jobs may not be possible. Schools are preparing to accelerate learning when they go back. Right now it is your family connection and stability that protects your children's physical and emotional health. Healthy children will catch up!

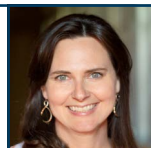


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