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How to Use This Kit

Welcome, friends.

This kit has been designed to support your family during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Inside you will find a Discussion Guide, Activities Guide, Acts of Kindness, Book recommendations with discussion and observation prompts, and a list of Community Helpers. This combination offers your family a variety of ways to understand COVID-19 and move forward in a healthy way. Most, if not all of the art materials suggested for projects in the Activities Guide can be found in your home so you can engage without incurring any costs or having to leave home. The handouts are yours to keep; we hope they'll continue to be of use to you and your family.

We aren't suggesting that everything in this kit needs to be done. Rather, you should review the information and determine what will work best for your family. It is an extraordinary time we are living in. You don't have to be perfect to care for your kids during these difficult circumstances. You just have to be you. Extra hugs, caring language, and allowing yourself to slow down and breathe are a great place to start. You've got this. We believe in you.

This kit is designed to start your journey of healing, but not to complete it. It is intended to be educational, not to replace the work of medical professionals. Information regarding COVID-19 changes rapidly, and we will all need to stay alert, continue to follow research, continue discussions, and invest beyond what this kit provides.

This kit was assembled by a children's librarian and a licensed children's counselor specializing in art and play therapy.

The version of the kit you're utilizing was published on May 1st, 2020. Check in at www.thehealinglibraryus.com/free-downloads for the most recent version available.

If you find your family is in need of other kits like this you can find free downloads on topics including The Death of a Loved One, The Death of a Pet, Separation & Divorce, and Alzheimer's & Your Family available at www.thehealinglibraryus.com/free-downloads.

Thank you for taking this step in your healing process. We wish you peace.



Discussion Guide

When it comes to discussing scary situations with children, it's best to keep it simple and be honest. Your children may have picked up pieces of COVID-19 information from your conversations with other adults, from school, and from friends. When all those pieces get put together, the scarier tidbits can take center stage in their minds.

As adults, our role is to reassure our children. To assist your discussions as a family, try one of these topics. We've written them in a way that will be simple enough to explain to your child. If you'd like more information, you can refer to any of the Resource Materials listed at the end of this Discussion Guide.

Remember, this discussion is just the beginning of your journey. Your family's version of caring for yourselves and your loved ones will be unique. The other resources in this kit may be able to assist you as you move forward.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is the name for the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. A novel coronavirus is a coronavirus that we've never seen before. SARS-CoV-2 is hard to remember, so unofficially people have been referring to it as the "COVID-19 Virus." (GoodRx, 2020)

COVID-19 is an acronym, or an abbreviated word that comes from the letters of several words. Here's what it looks like if we break those words down:

Corona Virus & Disease-19

CO - comes from Corona

VI - comes from Virus

D - comes from Disease

19 - is for the year the virus was reported, 2019

Coronaviruses are common in people. In fact, they're what cause the common cold! However, some coronaviruses cause pneumonia, a serious lung infection. COVID-19 is one of the coronaviruses that causes pneumonia. (GoodRx, 2020)

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) suggests reassuring your child that researchers and doctors are learning as much as they can, as quickly as they can, about the virus to better keep everyone safe. (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020)

Common reactions from your child

Children can reflect their feelings differently than adults. They may not know how to verbalize these feelings. Instead, they may express these things in the following ways, as listed on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) website:

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (toilet accidents, bedwetting, etc.)
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and "acting out" behaviors in teens
- Poor school performance or avoiding school
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

How to support your child

One of the best things we can do as adults is to show we are calm and prepared when it comes to COVID-19. Our children pick up on our behaviors, and if we show them we are not anxious because of the preparations we're taking, they, too, will feel calm and prepared.

Remember to use language that brings them comfort when talking with your children.

Here are our recommendations for following the guidelines created by the CDC:

- Create time to have discussions with your child. These discussions could be about COVID-19, or they could be about emotions, both theirs and yours.
- Reassure your child they are safe. Let them know it's ok to feel upset. Share with them how you deal with stress so they can learn positive strategies from you.
- Limit your child's exposure to coverage of COVID-19 including the news and social media to reduce misunderstandings. Newscasts are not designed for children and can be frightening or confusing. If you have older children, talk about what they're seeing and correct any misinformation.
- Keep up with regular routines. Not necessarily the way things were before the outbreak, but a new schedule that allows time for learning, playing, conversation, and expression.
- Be a role model. You, yourself also need good rest, healthy food, exercise, breaks, and socialization.



Prevention

Children are exceptionally empathic, and because of this, worrying about others with the virus can be very distressing for them. Among the best things we can give our children during times of distress are ways to take action and regain their power. (Public Broadcasting Service, 2015) The following Preventive Activities will allow your child to “fight” the virus and protect themselves, their family, and their friends.

● Wash Our Hands

○ Whenever we've been outside of our house, have used the bathroom, are about to eat, or are going to leave our house, we should wash our hands.

Here's how to wash your hands properly:

■ Take off any rings, bracelets, watches, or jewelry. These get in the way of your soap doing its job.

■ Wet your hands with cold, lukewarm, or warm water. (Not overly hot water, though. Drying your hands out from water that's too hot can cause cracks on your hands that could lead to infections.) Wetting your hands lets the soap dissolve and do a better job tackling germs.

■ Time for soap! You want to use enough soap to build a good lather. The COVID-19 Virus is wrapped in a membrane that can be broken up by soap, leaving the particles inside unable to infect you. You want your lather to last the full 20 seconds of scrubbing, so if you need to add more soap, that's okay.

■ Let's scrub! You'll want to scrub for at least 20 seconds. Some people sing Happy Birthday twice to time it right, other people sing the whole way through the ABC's song. No matter what you like, the most important thing is that you're scrubbing all the parts of your hands:

- Your palms
- The backs of your hands
- Your fingertips and under your nails
- Between your fingers
- Your thumbs

■ Rinse off all the soap and with it the dirt and germs that were on your hands.

■ Turn off the faucet with your elbow or a hand towel if you're at home or with a paper towel if you're out in public. You turned the faucet on when your hands had germs all over them, don't get those germs all over you again when you turn it off! (Moms or Dads should regularly clean faucets so germs don't stick around.)

■ Dry off with a paper towel (if you're out in public) or a hand towel is



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fine if you're at home. Every few days you'll want to wash your hand towels to keep them clean for your now sweet smelling, freshly scrubbed hands. If anyone in your house isn't feeling well, they should use their own personal hand towel.

■ Finally, use another part of your body or a paper towel to touch the doorknob on your way out of a restroom. Germs like to hang out on doorknobs. (National Public Radio, 2020)

● Social Distancing

○ One of the things that makes COVID-19 tricky is that people don't always show signs of being sick even when they have it! Because of that, people can accidentally make their friends or relatives sick. One way we can fight the virus and not let it spread from person to person is to stay a safe distance away from people we don't live with.

This means we can't be in groups for a while. That's why so many schools have closed. It also means churches, restaurants, concerts, and stores aren't places we should go. Sometimes, we may find ourselves in situations where we have to be around other people. To do this safely we need to keep a distance of at least 6 feet from anyone who doesn't live in our house.

We aren't sure how long we will need to stay at least 6 feet apart from people, since we're still learning a lot about COVID-19, so it's best to check in with your state government or www.cdc.gov to get the most up-to-date recommendations.

It might be sad not to get to be up close with those people, but there are fun things we can do to hang out with them at a distance!

■ Video Hang Outs - Of course you can arrange to video chat with friends and family members, but you can also take it a step further. Have a picnic together, read bedtime stories, play dress up, do some karaoke, or whatever creative ideas your child may have to make this even more engaging.

■ Organize Your Neighborhood - Maybe you want to decorate the sidewalks with chalk drawings to uplift one another, maybe you want to play music together from your apartment windows, or maybe you can create a scavenger hunt from your windows that changes each week. As human beings, we are creative, innovative, and filled with beauty. Sharing that can happen from 6 foot distances and beyond.

● Cough and Sneeze Safely

○ If you have to cough, cough into your elbow, not your hands. After all, we use our hands to basically do everything, so we don't want to cover them in germs!



○ If you sneeze, try to sneeze into a tissue that you then throw away. Using a tissue will prevent your germs from flying all over the place and trap them so you can throw them away. If you don't have a tissue, you can also use your elbow. Don't forget to wash your hands after you've thrown away that dirty tissue!

● Stay Healthy

○ One of the best things we can do to fight a virus is to be as healthy as possible. This means eating healthy food, exercising, getting plenty of rest, and drinking water. It also means talking about what we're feeling, taking quiet time when we need it, keeping our spaces clean, and participating in healthy activities that make us happy.

● Keep Our Home Clean

○ While keeping yourself clean is important, we also want to keep our environment clean. That means cleaning hard surfaces, but also things we might forget about cleaning that can also have a lot of germs on them: faucets, bathroom door handles, device screens, and keys.

○ Keeping your room clean for your parents will help. Make sure your dirty clothes are separate from your clean clothes and that any soft toys you love are getting washed regularly. Changing your bedding will help too! Lots of us don't know it, but we drool in our sleep. And you know what's in drool, right? Yup, more germs.

○ Also, consider taking your shoes off inside your house. Choose one designated spot where shoes will "live," take them off when you get inside, and store them there. After all, they do the hard work of touching the ground for us everywhere we go, and we don't need to track any extra germs into our nice clean homes by walking around in them.

If Someone Isn't Feeling Well

There are steps you should take if one of your family members doesn't feel well, especially if they're showing any of these symptoms of coronavirus that have been reported in children by Johns Hopkins Medicine:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2020)

First, you'll want to keep that family member apart from everyone else as much as possible.

Second, contact your medical provider for further instructions.

If your child is showing any of the following emergency symptoms as identified by Johns Hopkins Medicine, you should seek emergency medical attention:

- Difficulty breathing
- Inability to keep down any liquids
- New confusion or inability to awaken
- Bluish lips (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2020)

Keep the conversation going

To keep your conversation going, we've included discussion and observation questions along with suggested books, based on what we've gone over in this Discussion Guide. We recommend reading through each book before sharing it as a family.

Further

There is a LOT of information out there right now. As a parent, you're probably experiencing information overload, but still want to do the best job possible for your family. We've put together the following options to continue your reading and get ideas for considerate parenting during this time:

How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus>

Parenting During Coronavirus: You Are Enough

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/parenting-during-coronavirus-you-are-enough>

How to Spot Coronavirus Misinformation

<https://time.com/5803936/coronavirus-misinformation/>

Resources

GoodRx. (2020) What Does COVID-19 Stand For? Retrieved from:

<https://www.goodrx.com/blog/what-does-covid-19-mean-who-named-it/>

National Public Radio. (2020) Hand Washing Can Protect You From Coronavirus. But You Need to do it Right. Retrieved from:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/03/07/812861599/a-90-second-video-on-how-to-master-the-20-second-hand-wash>



Public Broadcasting System. (2015) Expanding Your Child's Circle of Concern. Retrieved From: <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/expanding-your-childs-circle-of-concern>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention . (2020) Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19. Retrieved from: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2020) Retrieved from: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>

Johns Hopkins Medicine. (2020) Coronavirus in Babies and Children. Retrieved from: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-in-babies-and-children>



Books to Share & Discuss

Sharing stories together is a very bonding and comforting experience for children. In addition, having discussions with our children while reading books can give them lots of new tools, including strategies for managing their emotions, allowing them to empathize with different people, and seeing examples of ways to take action when situations seem Scary.

Below we suggest several categories of books your family may find helpful, as well as Discussion Questions and Observation Prompts for each section. We hope these will aid your family in enriching your experience with a book.

We recommend you read a title first before sharing it with your child so there aren't any surprises.

Books About Germs or Being Sick

The following titles are great for discussing the spread of germs, what happens when we get sick, and how we can stay healthy.

To assist you in getting the most out of these titles, consider using the following Discussion Questions or Observation Prompts:

Discussion Questions:

- When seeing sick characters:
 - “How do you think they’re feeling right now?”
 - “How can you tell this person isn’t feeling well?”
- When seeing germs being spread:
 - “Hmm, what’s wrong with this picture?”
 - “What could have been done to stop these germs from spreading to other people?”
- When seeing sick characters being taken care of:
 - “I like seeing this person being helped. What are some things that make you feel better when you’re sick?”
 - “What are some other nice things we can do when someone we love isn’t feeling well?”



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Observation Prompts:

- If your child seems saddened by what's happening:
 - "Tell me about what you're feeling right now..."
 - Follow up with: "That sounds sad. Let's keep reading and see if the story makes us feel better."
- Upon completing the story, discuss how they're feeling now and what was learned.
- If your child seems scared or anxious about what's happening:
 - "Tell me about what you're feeling right now..."
 - Follow up by correcting any misinformation and reassuring your child that it's okay to feel scared, but that they are safe. You can ask what they know about how to stay safe to help show them they are in control. For example: "It's okay to be scared by that. But you know what, you're a very smart little girl. You know a lot about how to stay safe from germs. Tell me again about how to wash your hands to keep the germs away."
- If your child seems angry about what's happening:
 - "Tell me about what you're feeling right now..."
 - Follow up with: "Well, what should be happening differently?"
- Be sure to allow room in your conversation for their anger. Expressing anger through conversation is a very healthy tool for them to develop, and too often we try to put a stop to anger instead of letting children work through the emotion. However, guide the conversation towards something constructive. For example, "I understand why what (the character) did makes you angry. Sometimes people make mistakes and there's nothing we can do about it. Sometimes people make mistakes and we can help them by talking to them about what we think is wrong with what's happening. How would you help (the character) understand what's wrong?"
 - It may be appropriate to follow up with, "Is that how you would want someone to tell you you were wrong? How would you want to be talked to?"
- Once you've had a chance to discuss their anger, you may want to say something like, "Let's keep reading to see what happens. Maybe we'll feel better by the end of the story."
 - Upon completing the story, discuss how they're feeling now and what was learned.



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Online Books:

- Doctor Li and the Crown-Wearing Virus, by Francesca Cavallo.
 - Free pdf download available in 4 languages:
<https://freebooks.undercats.media/corona>
- Corona Virus: A Curious Guide for Courageous Kids , by Pleiadi and the network of Italian Children's Museums in collaboration with Art Jameel
 - Free and available in English and Arabic(read along, digital, printable):
<https://jameelartscentre.org/whats-on/corona-virus-a-curious-guide-for-courageous-kids/>
- A Kids Book About Coronavirus, by
 - Free printable book, pdf, or epub available in 2 languages:
<https://akidsbookabout.com/pages/covid-19>
- Coronavirus: A Book for Children , by Elizabeth Jenner, Kate Wilson, and Nia Roberts
 - Free pdf download or read it online:
<https://nosycrow.com/blog/released-today-free-information-book-explainin-g-coronavirus-children-illustrated-gruffalo-illustrator-axel-scheffler/>
- COVIBOOK , by Manuela Molina
 - Available as a free pdf download in 25 languages:
<https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>
- My Hero is You, How Kids can Fight COVID-19 , by Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), part of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
 - Free pdf download available in 38 languages:
<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/my-hero-you>
- I Don't Want to Wash My Hands , by Tony Ross
 - See Tony read it here:
<https://metro.co.uk/2020/05/01/lockdown-storytime-tony-ross-reads-little-princess-dont-want-wash-hands-12640154/>

Books at the Library

- Llama Llama Home with Mama, by Anna Dewdney
- Sick Simon, by Dan Krall
- The Sniffles for Bear, by Bonny Becker



Books About Feelings

The following titles are wonderful for discussing your child's emotions.

To assist you in getting the most out of these titles, consider using the following Discussion Questions or Observation Prompts.

Discussion Questions:

- For any emotion in any of these titles, you can engage your child by prompting with:
 - "Tell me about a time you felt (angry/happy/silly/scared/etc.)..."
 - "Have you ever helped someone who felt (angry/happy/silly/scared/etc.)? What did you do to help them?"
 - "When you feel (a negative emotion), what makes you feel better?"

Observation Prompts:

- No matter what emotion resonates with your child, it's worth recognizing. Happiness plays just as important a role in our lives as worry. Reassuring your child that emotions come and go for a reason can help them see that emotions aren't permanent and they can learn from them.

Here are a few ways to begin talking about different emotions with children:

- Anxiety/Worry/Fear:
 - "Tell me about a time you were worried/anxious/scared..."
 - Follow up with: "Feeling worry/anxiety/fear happens for a reason in our lives. It's our body's way of telling us something doesn't feel right. Once we recognize that feeling, we can take action to fix whatever is wrong. In that way fear/worry/anxiety can be a great friend to us!"
 - If their fear is specific to COVID-19, remember to gently correct any misinformation and remind them they are safe and in control. One way to do that might be by saying, "I understand how you feel. But don't forget -- you're a smart boy who is in control and can fight germs! Tell me what healthy things we can do to fight germs."
- Sadness:
 - "Did you know sadness can teach us a lot about ourselves? Paying attention to what makes us sad lets us avoid those things in the future. So when we recognize that we're feeling sad, let's try to listen to what it has to say. You can always talk to me about what you're feeling. Together, we can figure out the message that sadness is



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trying to tell you.”

○ Jealousy:

■ If your child is jealous because friends are still playing together or going on trips instead of social distancing, have them tell you why social distancing is important, how it protects your family and keeps everyone safe.

■ To address the feeling specifically, you could try saying something like, “Jealous is a really interesting feeling. It has so much to say about what makes us happy. Sometimes we don’t even know we might enjoy something until we see someone else doing the thing we want to do or playing with the thing we want to play with. Tell me, what is jealousy telling you about what would make you happy right now?”

○ Anger:

■ There are so many reasons a child could experience anger during these strange times we’re living in. Often, anger is merely the vehicle for other emotions, as opposed to actually being enraged by the situation they’re facing. Try to get to the bottom of what’s really going on as well as offering strategies for recognizing and then dissipating their anger.

● For example: “Talk to me about what’s making you so angry....”

○ Follow up with: “No one likes to feel angry. One of the hardest parts about feeling anger is feeling like we’re out of control. When we recognize we are angry, we can do things to feel better and get control again. What are positive things you do to get back in control when you’re angry?”

■ Positive examples:

- Taking deep, calming breaths
- Running hard to burn off energy
- Closing our eyes and counting to ten
- Taking time to be alone
- Talking with a grownup about what we’re feeling

Books:

● Bird Stays Home, by Linda Cartolano

○ Free video available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEGFxX1nCBM>

● How Do You Feel?, by Lizzy Rockwell

● Some Days, by Michaela Morgan

- The Way I Feel, by Janan Cain
- How Do I Feel?, by Norma Simon
- I Was So Mad, by Mercer Mayer

Books with Strategies

These titles will have stories, information, or activities regarding staying healthy or coping with COVID-19. There are also stories that feature breathing, yoga, staying present, and mindfulness in general.

To assist you in getting the most out of these titles, consider using the following Discussion Questions or Observation Prompts.

Discussion Questions:

- Topics such as mindfulness and “staying present” may be too advanced to discuss with your child. However, that doesn’t mean they won’t find reassurance and tools for dealing with stress as you share these titles. As you’re enjoying the books together, you can ask questions to clarify your child’s positive experience with the book. Later, when your child is experiencing stress, you can offer to recreate or reference parts of the books that resonated with them. Additionally, you can offer to sit and read the book again to help them feel better.

- Examples of questions you could ask:

- “What does this image make you feel?”
- “Didn’t that book make you feel nice? Why do you think it made you feel that way?”
- “I loved that story. What did you love about that story?”
- “Did you have a favorite part of that book? What made that your favorite part?”

Observation Prompts:

- When an idea or activity resonates with your child, suggest that you try it. They may want to do it together, or they may want to do it solo. Either is fine and should be encouraged, as this is your child gaining strategies for dealing with stress. Later, when your child is experiencing stress, bring up the activity and suggest they try it again. The more your child utilizes the stress-relieving strategy, the stronger their abilities to cope with stress will become.

Online Books:

- Rainbows in Windows, by Yumi
 - Free pdf download available here:
<https://helloyumi.com/coronavirus-children-book/>
- Be a Coronavirus Fighter, by Songju Ma Daemicke



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- Free pdf download available in 12 languages: <https://yeehoopress.com/>
- Staying Home, by Sally Nicholls
 - Free pdf available: <https://www.andersenpress.co.uk/staying-home/>
- The Princess in Black and the Case of the Coronavirus, by Shannon Hale & Dean Hale
 - Free pdf download available: <https://www.princessinblack.com/>
- The House We Sheltered In, by Freeman Ng
 - Free pdf downloads available in 3 formats (digital (color or black and white), printable (color or black and white), single page poem):
<https://www.authorfreeman.com/blog/sheltered/>
 - Video reading available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79L7ljYc94U>
- The Virus-Stopping Champion , by Hilary Rogers
 - Free pdf available in 30 (planned) languages:
<https://www.nabu.org/covid19/#translations>
- I Love You , by Michael Ross
 - Free pdf available in 30 (planned) languages:
<https://www.nabu.org/covid19/#translations>
- Count Cough-Ula , by Michael Ross
 - Free pdf available in 30 (planned) languages:
<https://www.nabu.org/covid19/#translations>
- Free pdf download and video recording available:
<https://bigideasforlittleminds.com/>

Library Books

- Stretch, by Doreen Cronin
- Quiet, by Tomie DePoala
- Here and Now , by Julia Denos

Finding These Books

Libraries may look a little different right now, but that doesn't mean you can't access these books! Check your library's online catalog to see if the book is available for curbside pickup or to put on hold. If it isn't, consider reaching out to your librarians to see if they can get it for you or recommend a similar book!.

Also, consider taking a peek at streaming platforms, like Facebook live and Youtube, to see if there are videos of the authors reading the titles themselves!

Activities Guide

These activities can be done individually or together as a family. We've compiled and created activities based on art and play-based therapies that you can participate in with materials commonly found around the home.

Drawing with Mo

Kennedy Center Artist-in-Residence Mo Willems is posting daily doodling videos to YouTube filled with artistic prompts, fun doodles, tours of his studio and the treasures inside, and Mo's unique sense of humor. You might know Mo from his books like *Don't Let Pigeon Drive the Bus*, *Elephant & Piggy*, or *Knufflebunny*. And if you're not familiar, your kids probably will be!

Drawing can be a great way to express feelings, escape reality (an important "pause" button for kids), and to get zany! However, just plopping kiddos in front of paper with some crayons isn't always enough. Mo does an amazing job of getting kids thinking creatively while focusing on the experience of drawing together, rather than a finished product. His emphasis on drawing being fun, no matter the quality of the drawing, is a great lesson for kids to learn. In addition, he's very reassuring about what's happening with regard to COVID-19.

Materials Needed:

- Anything to draw with: markers, crayons, colored pencils, regular pencils, an eraser, chalk, paints, anything! Really!
- Anything to draw on: paper, newspaper, magazine pages, the sidewalk, old (empty) cereal boxes, leftover wrapping paper, anything! Really!

The YouTube Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL14hRqd0PELGbKihHuTqx_pbvCLqGbOkF

For more information: <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/mo-willems/>



Mindfulness Minute

This breathing exercise can be used to calm down and refocus when kids are feeling stress, anxiety, anger, or just have the blues. Don't be surprised if kids don't "get it" right away. Mindfulness and meditation can take a while to understand, especially for very active kids. However, doing it regularly together and then reflecting on how they feel afterward will let them add it to their toolboxes of ways to deal with stress. To do this, they can sit upright in a chair or they can lie down. Whatever they find comfortable.

- Close your eyes (if this is comfortable for you. Otherwise, relax your eyes and focus your gaze on something far away.)
- Breathe in steadily for 4 seconds
- Hold your breath for 1 second
- Breathe out steadily for 4 seconds
- Hold your breath for 1 second

Do this 6 times and a minute will have gone by. If they want to keep going, allow them to do so.

While your child is doing this you can offer any or all of the following directions in a gentle voice:

Breathing In:

- "Follow the trail your breath takes into your body."
- "Pay attention to the cool air entering your body."
- "Fill your lungs and belly slowly with fresh, clean air."
- "Breathe in calm, cool air all the way down to your belly."

Holding Breath In:

- "Pause."
- "Hold your breath."

Breathing Out:

- "Let the breath out slowly, emptying your lungs."
- "Slowly exhale, letting the air back out."
- "Exhale now, letting the clean air go."
- "Now exhale slowly, and feel the calm stay with you."

Holding Breath Out:

- "Pause again."
- "Hold your breath."

Environment Needed:

- A place where you can be quiet together. That means no TV, no music, and no phones or tablets.



Keep a Journal

Without a doubt, this is a monumental time we are living in. Throughout history, journals have given us amazing insight into our past. Especially important are the journals of children. Never before have young people experienced just what they currently are. The circumstances of being the most digitally engaged and connected generation ever, who are now faced with isolation, quarantine, and a never-ending news cycle are unique. And their stories could be important for our future. Encouraging them to keep a journal may be of historical importance, but it may also simply be a good outlet for them to express themselves privately, as opposed to through social media.

Materials Needed:

- Something to write with
- Something to write on. You can even make your own journal out of paper and staples!

Here are some journal prompts that may help your child start writing. Feel free to cut them out and glue or tape them into the journal if it's helpful.

Are you still going to school?	Is your family Self Isolating?
What do you miss about school?	What is something "normal" you miss?
What is one surprising thing that's happened to you recently?	What's the same about your life that you didn't expect?
When was your last day of school? What was that day like?	Are you practicing Social Distancing?
What does a perfect world look like to you?	If you could do anything today, what would you do?
Can you draw the most beautiful place you've ever seen (real or imagined)?	What's one thing you've learned recently?



Collage

Collage is a wonderful tool to express creativity. Not only are the materials needed easy to come by (ANYTHING can be used!), but you need no artistic talent whatsoever to jump in and feel creative. Below are a number of ways to make a collage. Once you've tried one or two, if your child has their own creative idea for how to make a collage, run with it!

Vision Board

- Vision boards were really popular a few years ago. The idea is simple: Bring focus to what you really want, place it somewhere you will see it often, see it and be reminded of what's important to you. The most effective vision boards are created around the idea of "How do you want to feel?" not "These are things I want." However, that concept may be tricky for your child to grasp at first. If they need to start from a place of "this is what I want," go with it. Reflect upon the emotions and feeling it gives them once they've finished. The next time you make a collage, use the emotions identified in their first collage as inspiration.

Storytime Collage

- Rather than trying to create something specific, try to do this in a stream-of-consciousness way. As you flip through the images, let them inspire you and take you on a journey. We don't know where we are going, we don't know the story we are about to be told, and we don't know what it will look like at the end! This is a great way to let kids both tell a story and be told a story at the same time!

Torn Paper Collage

- This one can be a challenge for the perfectionist kids out there. However, in this version the goal is an imperfect finished product. Start with a specific idea, maybe a fish tank filled with fish, and then see what the end result looks like when it has "imperfect" edges. Want to take it further? How would it look different if it was recreated using scissors? If you remake the image, which do you prefer? What was challenging about this for you?

Emotion Collage

- Can you create a collage that makes a picture of a specific emotion? What would silliness look like? How about cranky? Can you create a collage of all the emotions you feel throughout the day? Each time you recognize an emotion you're feeling, go and add it to your collage! At the end of the day you can look back and see all the emotions you felt and which emotion you felt the most. What do you think that means? What do you want tomorrow to look like?



Materials Needed:

- An assortment of papers (magazines, newspapers, old receipts, wrapping paper, construction paper, empty food wrappers or boxes, junk mail).
- Something to make a collage on: a big piece of paper, some old cardboard, a box, whatever!
- Scissors can be used, but you can also tear the paper.
- Glue or glue sticks if you want things to stick, but you can also make a temporary collage by laying the pieces down — no glue needed!
- Extra stuff! What random things do you have lying around that would enhance your collage? Glitter, rubber bands, beads, grass, leaves, seeds, bottle caps, tags, fabric scraps, stickers, whatever!

Write a Letter

Writing to the people you love is a great way to let them know you're thinking of them and to express yourself! You can stick to writing words and ideas, or you can include drawings (or collages!), poems, recipes, or whatever creative ideas your child may have. Also, if you don't have a stamp, don't worry. You can hand deliver notes to the people who live near you -- no stamp required! In addition, if you're not comfortable sending physical letters, you can always take a photo of your child's letter and share it virtually.

Materials Needed:

- Something to write on: paper, scrap paper, wrapping paper, postcards, cards, construction paper, the inside of a cereal box, anything!
- Something to write with: pencils, pens, crayons, markers, paint, stamps, whatever!
- Postage stamps if you want to send it to someone who doesn't live nearby.

Help with Food Preparation

Family routines and rituals are an important part of life for children during normal times. Studies have shown that routines such as eating dinner together or bedtime rituals provide children with structure that guides their behavior, supports early development, improves self regulation, and builds vocabulary and social skills. (American College of Pediatrics, 2018). When faced with times of distress, these same routines and rituals add comfort and a sense of normalcy, and lead to healthier outcomes.

Preparing food together is a perfect activity to turn into a family routine. It provides opportunities to give children clear assignments and responsibilities, which in turn provide comfort through providing predictability. Research has shown that, when families assign roles

for their daily activities, children fare better academically and socially during periods of transition. (University of Illinois Extension, 2018)

As if all that wasn't compelling enough, working with food has its own special benefits. The multisensory experience of preparing food lets children understand where their food comes from, builds their vocabularies, and is an interesting way to introduce mathematics. (Monti Kids, 2019)

This pasta recipe is easy to create, and there are a number of ways your child can be of assistance: measuring and adding ingredients, kneading the dough, shaping the pasta, the entire process can be performed together. To add extra layers of learning, discuss the textures, smells, and colors. Use the real names of the ingredients and celebrate your accomplishments!

Ingredients:

- 4 oz whole wheat flour
- 6 oz white flour (AP)
- Mix the eggs and water and pour into the well.
- Mix with your hands or a fork in a spiral motion to bring the wet and dry together.
- 2 eggs
- App. 1 oz water

Directions:

1. Mix the flours together in a wide bowl, and then make a well in the center. Once you have a dough, knead for about 5 minutes.
2. Let dough rest, covered in a bowl, for at least an hour before shaping.
3. To shape, roll dough into long "snakes" roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ inch around. "Cut" with a fork into pieces roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long. Press with fork tines gently to create shape.
4. Boil in heavily salted water until tender.



More Activities:

Visit the Cincinnati Zoo! The zoo has been posting amazing videos to their YouTube page so you can virtually visit them and see all the animals, including the famous Fiona!

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/c/cincinnati-zoo/featured>

Perhaps your kids have been receiving books thanks to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. (If you don't know about this, check it out here and see if you're in an area to receive free books!) Well, now they can listen to Dolly herself read bedtime stories thanks to Goodnight with Dolly!

Link: <https://imaginationlibrary.com/>

If dance is more their speed, Alvin Ailey's American Dance Theater has your contemporary dance needs covered, The Royal Opera House is ready for your ballet viewing, and Cirque Du Soleil is rounding things out with their own offerings.

Alvin Ailey Link: <https://www.alvinailey.org/performances-tickets/ailey-all-access>

Royal Opera House Link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/RoyalOperaHouse>

Cirque Du Soleil Link: <https://www.cirquedusoleil.com/cirqueconnect#hubcontent>

The Tennessee Aquarium has compiled a ton of resources to give you an Aquarium at Home experience featuring live streaming of their tanks and animals, worksheets, music, educators' guides, and more that can all be accessed from home.

Link: <https://tnaqua.org/aquarium-at-home/>

Quarantine Family Toolkit created by Kristin Ramsey, a Registered Art Therapist and Licensed Professional Counselor, has so many things to offer!

Link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-UyiyRJm3ifZe44St-tiAf9jlf7XrpAJ/view>

The Reason Vision Boards Work and How to Make One by Elizabeth Rider, Nutritionist, Blogger

Link: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-scientific-reason-why_b_6392274

How You and Your Kids can De-Stress During Coronavirus by Deborah Farmer Kris, Parent Educator, Writer

Link:

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-you-and-your-kids-can-de-stress-during-coronavirus>



Library Activities

Libraries are also a great place to find fun, mindful, and educational resources. At Lansing Public Library, we currently have various digital programs for children, including storytime, STEAM, sensory videos, sing-a-longs, etc. You can see the schedule for these programs and more here: <https://www.lansingpl.org/calendar>

Lansing Public Library also allows cardholders to access many different electronic resources that are fun for the whole family. These include Media on Demand, Kanopy Kids streaming, Tumblebook Library, Audiobook Cloud, Mango languages, and much more! Visit the library's website to access these and learn more through this link: <https://www.lansingpl.org/databases>

Resources:

Monti Kids. (2019) 10 Montessori Food Prep Activities for Toddlers. Retrieved from: <https://montikids.com/montessori/10-montessori-food-prep-activities-for-toddlers/>

American College of Pediatricians. (2018) 3 Benefits of Family Routines and Rituals. Retrieved from: <https://www.acped.org/3-benefits-of-family-routines-and-rituals>

University of Illinois Extension. (2020) Reduce Stress with Family Routines and Rituals. Retrieved from: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/grandparents/article.cfm?ID=5100&IssueID=5215>

Acts of Kindness

Many of us are still feeling powerless and scared as we face COVID-19. You can be a ray of sunshine in these dark times and combat these feelings by spreading kindness. These activities can be done individually or as a family.

Delivery Thank You Baskets

You might be getting things delivered from grocery stores, restaurants, or pharmacies at the moment. If that's not the case, you are probably receiving mail from mail carriers. No matter what your circumstance, you may want to thank the people out there who are working hard to keep us safe, healthy, and in communication with others!

Consider making a Thank You Basket for these hard workers with a sign for them to take what they need. Based on the contents you include in your basket, you may want to keep this out of the reach of children. Here are some things you might include:

- Handmade thank you notes or cards
- Wrapped tea bags, bottled water, juice, or other beverages
- Granola bars, candy, chips, or other individually wrapped, non-perishable items
- Individual tissue packet
- Unopened travel sized toiletries
- Instant or canned soups

Gift Cards

Many small businesses are struggling during this time. Purchasing a gift card to use in the future from your favorite restaurant, flower shop, book store, or other neighborhood establishment can make a big difference in their lives right now! Also make sure to support your local stores and restaurants!

Also, since a lot of events like birthday parties, weddings, and graduations are being cancelled, gift cards or goods directly mailed to those you love in place of your presence can perform two kind acts at once!

Say Thank You

Creating little notes or cards to thank our medical, postal, delivery, emergency workers, teachers, etc. can add some brightness to what are very stressful days. Consider sending a card thanking them and their staff for all the hard work they're doing to keep us all safe and healthy.

Positive Public Art (Scavenger Hunt)

Decorate your driveway or sidewalk with chalk drawings encouraging others, hang a homemade sign in your window that says “Hello!” to folks outside talking a walk, or leave positive messages to the world in any creative way you’d like! It will brighten someone’s day and if a few people in your neighborhood do it, it can make for a fun scavenger hunt for kids. Grownups can arrange to change out drawings once a week to keep the hunt going!

Create a Story Walk

A StoryWalk® is just what it sounds like — pages of a book are laminated and placed in succession along a walking path so families may enjoy a story as they get outside and exercise. Your community can create one by following the simple instructions available at the bottom of this web page under “StoryWalk FAQ’s.”

- Link: <https://www.kellogghubbard.org/storywalk>

Don’t Stand for Discrimination

The American Academy of Pediatrics put it best when they suggested “Be a good role model. COVID-19 doesn't discriminate and neither should we. While COVID-19 was first reported in Wuhan, China, it doesn't mean that having Asian ancestry – or any other ancestry – makes someone more susceptible to the virus or more contagious. Stigma and discrimination hurt everyone by creating fear or anger towards others. When you show empathy and support to those who are ill, your children will too.” (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020)

As a family you can support Asian-owned businesses, check in on your neighbors to offer your support, or stand up to racism or xenophobia when you see it. A helpful guide for how to do this safely has been created by Hollaback!, a global, people-powered movement to end harassment. To access the Bystander Intervention information:

https://www.ihollaback.org/app/uploads/2016/11/Show-Up_CUPxHollaback.pdf

Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2020) 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Retrieved from: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>

Community Helpers

The following are suggestions for types of helpers that may exist within your community. Some are resources for you to look up yourself, and others may be directly accessed.

Telehealth Services

You can call any kind of insurance provider to inquire whether telehealth services are covered for the service you need.

For example, “Will counseling sessions using telehealth be covered? If so, what type of telehealth is covered? Are only video sessions covered? Are phone sessions covered at this time as well?”

Please note, telehealth sessions may only be covered for a limited time, so you may want to ask what the coverage time is. Some companies are only providing telehealth coverage during peak pandemic months.

If you do not have insurance coverage, there may be care providers who provide a sliding fee scale for services (continue reading for more information on this).

Therapists and Counselors

It is perfectly normal during times of distress for your child to experience a regression in behavior such as bedwetting (or other potty accidents), sleep disturbances, being more clingy, or having more emotional outbursts. (New York Times, 2020) They may also show signs of grief due to a variety of pandemic-related losses (i.e. loss of contact with loved ones while quarantined, change in daily routine, a loved one dying, etc.). (National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement, 2016) Navigating what’s normal and what requires professional help can be confusing. If you’re concerned about your child, you can always contact a therapist or counselor.

A counselor uses various approaches when working with children, often combining play therapy, art therapy, and/or traditional therapy methods (such as cognitive behavioral therapy).

Counselors are sometimes called clinicians, clinical social workers, or therapists, but they are all professionals with advanced degrees who are working with clients on a treatment goal toward improved mental health.



Therapists and counselors are available to work with:

- Parents
- Children
- Families

To find a therapist or counselor, try [Psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com) and use the “Find a therapist” tool. You can search for a therapist using filters such as location, their speciality, the age groups they work with, which insurances they take, etc. You will be provided a selection of therapists with business profiles you can read. Many profiles let you know whether the provider uses a sliding fee scale and/or if they provide telehealth options. Many providers are currently utilizing telehealth services.

You may also find assistance locating mental health services at lower costs by calling 211.

211 and United Way

211 is the phone number of a hotline run by United Way where you can find information or assistance with the following:

- supplemental food and nutrition programs
 - shelter and housing options and utilities assistance
 - emergency information and disaster relief
 - employment and education opportunities
 - services for veterans
 - health care, vaccination and health epidemic information
 - addiction prevention and rehabilitation programs
 - reentry help for ex-offenders
 - support groups for individuals with mental illnesses or special needs
 - a safe, confidential path out of physical and/or emotional domestic abuse (211, 2020)
- If dialing 211 does not work, go to [211.org](https://www.211.org) to find your local number.

Crisis Text Line

Text HOME to 741741 or send them a Facebook message to be connected to a volunteer Crisis Counselor who will help you move from a “hot moment” to a “cool moment.”

- In the US: Text HOME to 741741
- Their website: [crisistextline.org/](https://www.crisistextline.org/)
- To send a Facebook message: messenger.com/t/crisistextline

Emergency Responders

Should you have an emergency, these people can be reached via 911 to assist you in your emergency and get you or your loved one the care they need.

Support Groups

Support groups are popping up for:

- Families
- Students
- Parents
- Location specific
- Perform a web search or contact your local library or United Way for assistance.

Medical Providers

These People May Include:

- Primary care providers
- Pediatricians
- Hospital staff

Asking questions isn't just important for your kids, but for you as well. Utilize your time with these professionals by asking questions, asking for clarification if you don't understand something they said, and identifying more resources.

Church or Religious Leaders

Many find that religious support can be a source of relief during times of distress. Though face-to-face meetings or visits to a house of worship may not be advisable in these times, there are still ways to receive religious guidance. Even if you don't consider yourself an active member, your religious community can offer support in a variety of ways.

There are online streaming services for meditations or services, faith-based Instagram accounts being created, emails and texts being sent. (World Economic Forum, 2020)

To find out how to engage with your faith-based community, call your place of worship to find out what they offer while you remain safely at home.

Resources

211. (2020) About 211. Retrieved From: <https://www.211.org/pages/about>



Counselor vs. Therapist vs. Psychologist. Retrieved from:

<https://www.humanservicesedu.org/counselor-vs-psych-vs-therapist.html#context/api/listings/prefilter>

World Economic Forum. (2020) Here's How Religious Groups and Services Have Adapted During the Coronavirus Pandemic. Retrieved from:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/amid-coronavirus-online-services-religion-faith-conv19/>

The New York Times. (2020) Why is My Big Kid Acting Like a Toddler? Retrieved from:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/15/parenting/coronavirus-child-regression.html>

National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement. (2016) Ambiguous Loss. Retrieved from:

<https://grievingstudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ambiguous-loss.pdf>