

**SOCIAL DISTANCING WITH A PLAN  
FAMILY TOOLKIT**

Adapted from Division of Developmental and Behavioral Health, Kansas

March 2020

Family Toolkit 1

Hello Everyone,

Quarantines, stay at home orders, and lockdowns are terms that we are all hearing now and it can make life challenging for families. We are here to help with some ideas about activities and resources that can get you through an unusual period of modern American history. Don't forget that all of us have a great deal more strength and creativity than we know. Difficult times can bring that out in us, just like they did in past world wars, epidemics, and political upheaval.

We have designed this toolkit to give everyone some ideas about where to look for basic resources like food and housing, activities for your family to keep everyone energized, connected and creative and what to do with those family members who may have special needs.

COVID 19 is the name for the illness caused by the novel Coronavirus. Here is a slightly different idea of what COVID can mean for you and your family:

- C** **Cooperate** - With state and local orders, as well as recommendations to keep physical distance between yourself and your children and others.
- O** **Operate** - Find ways for your family to continue to function with work, school and physical activity.
- V** **Vocalize** -Talk about how this makes you feel. Most likely you are not alone in how you feel.
- I** **Ideas** - Now is the time to come with new ideas, both big and small. Think about your future and the possibilities that you want to pursue.
- D** **Determination** - Every person has had to overcome personal stress and difficulty. Our ancestors most certainly did as well. Strength is in us. Let's find it now that we need it.

Remember, you are not alone.

Everyone on the planet is going through this right along with you.

*Special Thanks to the providers and staff who created this Toolkit:* Bob Batterson, MD, Gail Robertson, PhD, Angela Guzman, MSW, Jami Gross-Toalson, PhD, Elizabeth Willen, PhD, Lisa Campbell, MD, Christina Low-Kapalu, PhD, Cy Nadler, PhD, Justine Edwards, RN, and Mary Anne Hammond

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*NOTE of DISCLOSURE: This toolkit and the suggestions inside are not a replacement for direct clinical advice or medical recommendations. Please follow all recommendations from your medical and mental health providers, as well as state and local orders.*

## **How to talk to your kids about COVID-19**

Author: Christina Low-Kapalu, PhD

Link | <https://www.childrensmercy.org/parent-ish/2020/03/covid-19/>

Children are becoming more and more aware of the coronavirus - though they may not fully understand it or know how seriously to take it - as it begins to affect their daily lives with school closures, event cancellations and travel restrictions. With this, many parents are trying to figure out how to talk to their children about the virus.

Here are a few tips to try and help guide your conversations.

- ❑ Make sure to **check in with your own thoughts and feelings** about the virus before talking with your child. It's important for you to be prepared for the conversation, not just with facts about COVID-19, but also emotionally so you are prepared to answer their questions. Remember, if they ask a question you don't have the answer to, be honest and say you don't know but will find out.
- ❑ It's good to start by **asking what they have heard**. Many kids have already been exposed to some information about coronavirus. By starting the conversation asking what they already know, it allows you to correct any misinformation they may already have received.
- ❑ **Use kid friendly language** that won't alarm them. Keep in my mind the age of the child and use developmentally appropriate explanations. You can share that this virus is kind of like the flu that maybe your child or a family member has had in the past. Explain that for most people, it is mild and that kids generally get mild cases of coronavirus.
- ❑ **Remain calm** and encourage them to do the same. Reassure your child by letting them know that lots of people - doctors, family members, teachers, etc. - are taking precautions to keep everyone safe.
- ❑ **Talk to your child about what they can do**: cough into their elbow, wash hands often (and for 20 seconds at a time) and try not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth, particularly with unwashed hands. They should also keep in mind the importance of contact with others — while hugs for mom, dad, and family are OK limit their contact with others, especially those that might be sick.
- ❑ Continue to **check back and encourage kids to come to you with questions**. After your conversation, ask your child some questions to confirm what they heard. Encourage them to come to you with any questions they may have. By keeping the dialogue going, it gives you an opportunity to address any concerns quickly.

In addition to talking with your kids to make sure they understand what COVID-19 is, there are also a few tips to help kids adjust to the changes around them.

- ❑ **Stick to routines and schedules**, within guidelines, to maintain consistency. Obviously, you are going to have some changes to your normal routine, as schools close and events are canceled/postponed, but keeping normal sleep and wake times will help make kids feel like life is continuing as normal.
- ❑ Remember to **take media breaks**. While having the news on constantly provides you with updates, it allows for a lot of exposure to some scary information that may be too much for your child to manage. There are resources that are well vetted such as this kid friendly comic shared by an NPR reporter. ([https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PYrKYfOBa4p-azl5z\\_46KjMbi1FSmL\\_Y/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PYrKYfOBa4p-azl5z_46KjMbi1FSmL_Y/view))

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

- ❑ National Association of School Psychologists | [https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)
- ❑ Kid-friendly comics about COVID-19 |  
  
<https://publichealth.arizona.edu/sites/publichealth.arizona.edu/files/Corona%20Virus%20Comic%20Book.jpg>  
  
<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>
- ❑ More Advice for Parents Talking to Kids and Teens about COVID-19  
Psychology Today | <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/smart-parenting-smarter-kids/202003/how-talk-kids-and-teens-about-the-coronavirus>  
  
PBS | <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus>  
  
University of Kentucky | <https://education.uky.edu/advice-for-parents-talking-to-kids-about-covid-19/>  
  
The University of Arizona | <https://publichealth.arizona.edu/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fpublichealth.arizona.edu%2Fnews%2F2020%2F-covid-19-communication-toolkit-parents-and-teachers>

Centers for Disease Control | <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

New York Times | <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/parenting/coronavirus-kids-talk.html>

❑ Supporting Teenagers and Young Adults

Child Mind Institute | <https://childmind.org/article/supporting-teenagers-and-young-adults-during-the-coronavirus-crisis/>

Harvard Medical School | <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-to-talk-to-teens-about-the-new-coronavirus-2020031419192>

Anxiety and Depression Association of America | <https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/how-talk-your-anxious-child-or-teen-about> |

❑ LGBTQIA Youth | Human Rights Campaign | <https://www.hrc.org/resources/covid-19>

Commented [RG2]: Looks like we can all edit at the same time in sharepoint

Commented [RG3R2]: @Willen, Elizabeth

Commented [GM4]: @Robertson, Gail, Good morning! I wanted to touch base with you, before I get to some patient needs that are pressing. In our section, the part with the inpatient facilities, I'm thinking it might be helpful to differentiate between which are adult and which are pediatric. I'll go ahead and add that and you can edit to how you see fit!

Commented [GM5R4]: It looks awesome Gail, you hafta be so proud of what you have had a masterful hand in guiding!!! I am going to head to some patient care stuff, but please let me know if you need anything!

Commented [GR6R4]: Sounds good! Only thing I wish we had were some handouts – but we can work on that for the future!  
@Guzman, Angela, MSW

Commented [GR7R4]:

## **Family Resources**

Author: Justine Edwards, RN, MSN, CPEN

Families everywhere are learning to cope very quickly to changes in their homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although everyone's experiences are unique, there are some simple things that can be done to maintain consistency and some normalcy at this time.

### **Setting a schedule:**

- Keep morning routines the same (dressing, morning hygiene, breakfast)
- Maintain mealtimes
- Set "working hours" if parents are working from home
- Make a schedule for children to complete online learning, chores, and activities. Kids do much better with this if they get to contribute and decide when and/or how this happens.
- Keep evening routines the same (dinner, baths, bedtimes)
- Make time for physical activity. This is important for general health and self-care.

### **Letting go/Being flexible:**

Sometimes we set the best plan and it's just not the day for it – maybe everybody woke up on the wrong side of the bed or maybe you've been stuck in the same house with each other for a week, a month, or more. Whatever the reason, it is okay to sometimes throw the details out and stick with the basics (wake up, eat, do some things, and go to sleep).

**Social distancing** is a word we hear all the time now. This is making sure that we maintain at least 6 feet of distance between ourselves and others when it is necessary to go out in public and avoid going out in public if possible. It also applies to limiting contact with those we share living areas with, especially loved ones who are the most vulnerable, so we don't get them sick. This does not mean we should stop interacting completely though. It is possible to stay connected with people while keeping yourself and others safe. In your home, this is an opportunity to learn new fun things that you and your loved ones can enjoy doing together.

### **Tips to stay connected:**

- Utilize technology to have virtual hangouts (ie: Skype, Zoom, FaceTime, etc.)
- Make phone calls
- Go on walks while practicing social distancing. Wave and smile at others you see.
- In your own living area, you can spend time with your family playing games, reading together, completing puzzles, and other creative activities.

**Know your limits:**

- ❑ Set up a safe place that anyone in the home can use to get privacy and a moment away from others (set a time limit for use of space)
- ❑ Have times throughout the day for breaks away from each other
- ❑ Ask for help
- ❑ When possible, try to recognize that you or your child need a break **before** problems get too big to manage. For example, if you see your child starting to get upset or overwhelmed, you can suggest a short, calming break. Make sure to do this for yourself as well.

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**ONLINE RESOURCES**

- ❑ National Child Traumatic Stress Network  
| <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-caregiver-guide-to-helping-families-cope-with-the-coronavirus-disease-2019>  
| <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/informacion-en-espanol>
- ❑ National Child Traumatic Stress Network  
| Simple Activities | <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/simple-activities-children-and-adolescents>
- ❑ Healthy eating and exercise tips  
| US Dept. of Health and Human Services – National Heart, Blood and Lung Institute | <https://cap4kids.org/kansascity/>
- ❑ Meal Programs for Kids – For children under 18; most do not require any verification  
  
NYC- <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/food/free-meals>  
Westchester- <https://www.westchestergov.com/home/all-press-releases/8330-westchester-county-schools-food-distribution-plan>
- ❑ Family Food Distribution | <https://www.harvesters.org/get-help>
- ❑ <https://www.foodbanknyc.org/covid-19/>





## **Parent Resources**

Author: Jami Gross-Toalson, PhD

We all know that in order to care for those we love, we must first be sure we are caring for our own needs. This is true now more than ever. When we are stressed, our children can feel that stress and may feel more scared themselves. We are also not able to care for our family's basic needs in the same way when we are not managing stress well.

**Social support** is an important part of caring for ourselves. However, social distancing makes it difficult for us to use that support in the same way. Being physically distant from friends and family can feel strange, but it is important to continue to find ways to reach out and maintain contact with those who make us feel safe and loved.

Find new and unique ways to connect with your support system to be sure that you avoid feelings of isolation and loneliness. Reach out to at least one friend per day through phone or email. Talk about something other than COVID-19. Share ideas for staying active and maintaining a good schedule during the day.

**Set limits on the news** you are taking in each day. Rather than constantly monitoring the news or avoiding it completely, it can be helpful to set times each day that you read or watch the news. Find 1-2 news sources that are most reliable and only check those sources each day. While staying informed can be helpful and sometimes ease the anxiety related to the virus, it is important that this information not take over too much of your daily life.

If you feel that your mental health is a struggle for you, reach out for help. If anxiety, mood changes, or other symptoms are impacting your ability to do what you need to do each day, that may be a sign that you should seek help. There are several options for you to obtain help through telehealth or in person (Please see the last 2 pages of this toolkit).

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### **ONLINE RESOURCES**

- ❑ What COVID-19 and social distancing means for your Mental Health  
American Psychological Association |  
<https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi/research-information/social-distancing>

❑ Worker's rights, Unemployment, and Labor resources |

<https://labor.ny.gov/unemploymentassistance.shtm>

❑ Help with Bills, Groceries, and other Resources to Meet Needs |

The assistance that individuals may need are many and varied: groceries, clothing, housing, health care, counseling, transportation, employment, emotional support. It is okay to ask for what you or your family needs.

<https://a069-access.nyc.gov/accesshra/>

<https://www.robinhood.org/rh-relief-effort-resources/>

❑ Parent Support Virtual Groups

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07egz8q4y72f9585ec&llr=zga6rzjab&showPage=true>

<https://www.naminycmetro.org/support-groups/>

<https://www.naminycmetro.org/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://namiqn.org/resources-to-help-you-with-covid19/>

❑ Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation | <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Taking-Care-of-Your-Behavioral-Health-During-an-Infectious-Disease-Outbreak/sma14-4894>

❑ Mental Health Resources:

- Reach out to your insurance company to determine who is covered in your area for mental health support
- Search for providers offering telehealth services if that works best for you. In person sessions are still provided by many therapists if that works better for you
- Your employer may offer free therapy through an employee assistance program
- See section at the end for emergency support resources
- <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/covid-19-resources.html>
- [https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/disaster\\_resources/pandemic\\_influenza/](https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/disaster_resources/pandemic_influenza/)

❑ Technology Options for Staying Connected

Netflix Watch Parties | <https://www.netflixparty.com>

Online Games (Words with Friends, Trivia Crack, Stop)

Whats App/iMessage/Texting/Zoom video conferencing

Social Media (Facebook, instagram, snapchat, etc.)

## **Educational Tools and Activities**

Author: Elizabeth Willen, PhD

For children who were attending school outside the home, we know that they are now doing online learning or distance education. While this means your children will still be “going to school”, it can add stress for all parents and caregivers who now must monitor schoolwork in a new way. In addition, many children who were receiving special education resources at school will continue to need extra help at home to keep up with work and learn effectively. Finally, virtual school will only take up so many hours in the day, and children benefit from other activities to keep their minds active and engaged in learning.

### **DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION TOOLS:**

The good news is that right now, because of the coronavirus outbreak, many online learning tools and apps are completely free of charge to children and families. Below, we have attached a link to a spreadsheet with all available learning options, but because some of these are just for school use, and because it is a really long list, we have also organized them into categories for families looking for specific types of resources.

**Full resource list** | <http://www.amazingeducationalresources.com/>

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### **Infant and Toddler Development**

We recognize that many families who were receiving in-home therapies for their infant or toddler are not getting that right now. There are still many things you can do on your own to help your child’s development. For ideas, tips, and tools to promote development, the following apps and websites may be helpful:

#### BabySparks App

- <https://babysparks.com/>
- For Birth to 2
- Some free content is available and is designed to help parents and caregivers track their child’s progress
- Uses video instruction for caregivers to teach developmental skills
- Available in **Spanish (Español)**

#### Circle Time Fun

- <https://circuitimefun.com/>
- Fun online classes for children 0-6 and their caregivers

#### Vroom App

- <https://www.vroom.org/>
- For Birth to 5
- Free tips and tools to support brain development in infants and toddlers
- Easy to use on any device and includes practice activities, videos, and other resources
- Available in *Spanish (Español)*

#### Zero to Three

- <https://zerotothree.org>
- Resources for parents and caregivers about early developmental milestones and activities to support development
- Available in *Spanish (Español)*

#### **Preschool and School Age: General Home Learning**

#### 2simple/Purple mash

- <https://2simple.com/blog/using-purple-mash-when-school-closed/>
- Click on login and then select 'Free Trial'
- This will take you to the page for free access during coronavirus outbreak.

#### Breakout Edu

- <https://www.breakoutedu.com/funathome>
- Offers digital games covering a range of educational topics

#### CK-12 Foundation

- <https://www.ck12.org/student/>
- Has math, science, social studies, and photography activities
- Mainly for middle and high school students but some content for younger students

#### EdX

- <https://www.edx.org/>
- Middle and High School classes
- Over 2500+ online courses, structured like college online classes
- Free as long as you don't want a certificate.

#### Freckle

- <https://www.freckle.com/>
- General curriculum resources but adjusts to child's individual instructional needs

#### Great! Schools

- <https://www.greatschools.org/gk/coronavirus-school-closure-support/>
- Lesson plans, worksheets, articles, book lists, and ideas to help families

#### Hippocampus

- <https://hippocampus.org/>
- 7,000 free videos in 13 subject areas
- Subjects: Math, Natural Science, Social Studies, Humanities and each subject has multiple topics within

#### I-Ready

- <https://www.curriculumassociates.com/supporting-students-away-from-school>
- Printable math or reading activity packets for grades K - 8
- Spanish** language materials also available (*Español*)

#### Izzit

- <https://www.izzit.org/index.php>
- Many educational videos across a variety of topics

#### Khan Academy

- <https://www.khanacademy.org> to help teach children from kindergarten to college prep
- You have to login to create an account and then add each child of yours.
- They are putting even more things together right now with school out.
- There is an app in addition to the website.

#### Outschool

- <https://outschool.com/#abk86dsf56>
- Live online classes for ages 3 to 18

#### PBS Learning Media

- <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/>
- Learning activities for preschoolers through high school students

#### Scholastic

- <https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>
- Day by day projects to keep kids reading, thinking, and growing
- Daily Lessons with 4 different learning experiences

#### Starfall

- <https://www.starfall.com/h/index.php>
- Some free online content for children in preschool through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- Free printable worksheets for English Language Arts and Math

#### Tiny Cards

- <https://tinycards.duolingo.com/>
- Free flash cards on many topics to help students with memorization
- Available in **Spanish (Español)**

### **Reading Instruction**

#### ABC Mouse/Adventure Academy

- <https://www.ageoflearning.com/schools>
- Comprehensive, research validated reading curriculum for children in preschool through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
- You need to ask your child's school administrator or teacher to complete the online access form

#### Audible App

- <https://www.audible.com/>
- eBooks for all ages
- Now offering free content for children for rest of school year
- Join for free or sign up through existing Amazon account
- Available in **Spanish (Español)**

#### Common Lit

- <https://www.commonlit.org/>
- Comprehensive literacy program focused on reading writing and communication skills across all grade levels
- To request a parent/guardian account, click on the sign-up button on the upper right corner of the screen
- After clicking on the Parent/Guardian button, you will see instructions for requesting access
- Note: You will need to submit a photo of yourself with a valid ID
- You can also check with your school and see if they have a membership in order to access site

#### Epic!

- <https://www.getepic.com/learn/freeremotestudentaccess/>
- Digital library for children aged 12 and under
- You can sign up for a 30-day free trial or request access from child's teacher/school
- Great for helping slower readers keep up with age-typical and preferred reading

#### Dyslexia Academy

- <https://dyslexia-academy.learnworlds.com/>
- They are offering a free one-month Gold membership to families
- This includes online tutoring, as well as educational resources

#### Libby

- <https://www.overdrive.com/apps/libby/>
- This phone app allows you to borrow eBooks and audio books from the library
- Has much of Missouri covered, but more limited library affiliations in Kansas

#### Raz-Kids

- <https://www.raz-kids.com/>
- More than 400 eBooks for interactive reading practice
- Also links to Headsprout which is an online reading program that adjusts to your child's reading level
- Free for rest of school year

#### Teach your Monster to Read

- <https://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/>
- A phonics-based reading program for young children

### ***Math Instruction***

#### Checkmath

- <https://www.checkmath.eu>
- Using your smartphone, you can check solutions to step-by-step handwritten math problems
- This works best when handwriting is neat and only the math problems (not the words) are shown

#### Coolmath

- <https://www.coolmath.com/>
- The Johnson County schools use this to help with Math
- Pick your grade level and practice math with games

#### MathWerkz - Werkz Publishing App

- <https://www.werkzpublishing.com/sciencewerkz/mathwerkz-10-for-free/>
- Get 10 free elementary school level math booklets for digital use through smartphone or tablet device
- Go to website and follow instructions for signing up and downloading material



#### Monster Math and Math Balance Apps

- Apps for your smartphone
- Fun games for children that teach basic math skills and mental math

#### Prodigy Math

- <https://www.prodigygame.com/>
- Free math learning tool for grades 1-8
- Works like a video game in which your child solves math problems to move game characters through challenges
- Adjusts to child's learning level automatically
- Sends updates to parents/caregivers so you can track your child's progress

#### Splash Learn

- <https://www.splashlearn.com/>
- Math games for kids
- Available on app or computer

#### Zearn

- [https://about.zearn.org/distance-learning?utm\\_campaign=distance-learning&utm\\_medium=native&utm\\_source=homepage](https://about.zearn.org/distance-learning?utm_campaign=distance-learning&utm_medium=native&utm_source=homepage)
- Comprehensive, research-based digital math instruction
- Instructions for parents and caregivers also available in **Spanish (Español)**

#### **Other Educational Resources**

#### **STEM Learning – Science, Technology, Engineering, Math**

Bill Nye the Science Guy

- <https://www.billnye.com/the-science-guy>

#### Labsland

- <https://labsland.com/blog/en/2020/03/12/schools-and-universities-closure-support/>
- For Middle and High School students
- Access to real laboratories for experimenting and learning
- May need school approval and access – check with your child's teacher or administrator

#### Mystery Science

- <https://mysteryscience.com/school-closure-planning>
- Free science mini-lessons for grades K through 5

#### ScienceWerkz - Werkz Publishing App

- <https://www.werkzpublishing.com/sciencewerkz/nsta-5-for-free/>
- Get 5 free science books through your smartphone or tablet device
- Go to website and follow instructions for signing up and downloading material

#### Miscellaneous:

##### Conjugemos

- <https://conjugemos.com/>
- Learn a new language
- Log in as a student and get started
- Available in *Spanish (Español)*

##### Duolingo App

- <https://www.duolingo.com/learn>
- Free language learning. Can use on computer or download app
- Available in *Spanish (Español)*

##### Cosmic Kids Yoga

- <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga/>

##### Go Noodle

- <https://www.gonoodle.com/>
- Get kids moving! Movement, yoga, and mindfulness activities for children

##### Let's Doodle with Mo Willems

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjaYnyCJDdU>

##### Line Puzzle: String Art App

- App for your smartphone
- Kids can connect and weave virtual lines to make or copy shapes

##### Sight Reading Suite

- <https://www.sightreadingfactory.com/>
- Learn to sight read music and sight sing

##### Typing Club

- <https://www.typingclub.com/>
- Program identifies child's baseline skills through initial testing then provides instruction to improve typing skills

## ***Virtual Field Trips and Museum Tours***

### Museums

- ❑ <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner?hl=en>
- ❑ <https://artsandculture.google.com/project/heritage-on-the-edge>
- ❑ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49YeFsx1rIw&feature=youtu.be>
- ❑ <https://static.museothyssen.org/microsites/exposiciones/2020/Rembrandt/index.htm>
- ❑ <https://www.castellodirivoli.org/en/mostra/digital-cosmos/>

### Field Trips

- ❑ <https://www.discoveryeducation.com/community/virtual-field-trips/>
- ❑ <http://litlifepd.com/2017/08/04/10-online-field-trips-take-class/>
- ❑ <https://www.waterford.org/resources/3-great-virtual-field-trips-for-early-learners/>
- ❑ <http://www.airpano.com/360photo/Everest-Nepal/>
- ❑ <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour>
- ❑ <https://www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/national-parks/virtual-national-parks-tours>
- ❑ <https://techcrunch.com/2016/08/25/google-now-lets-you-explore-u-s-national-parks-via-360-degree-virtual-tours/>
- ❑ <http://cincinnatizoo.org/home-safari-resources/> (virtual safari with the Cincinnati Zoo every day at 2 pm)

## **Autism and Developmental Disabilities**

Author: Cy Nadler, PhD

We hope that many of the resources throughout this document will be helpful for families with children with autism, Down syndrome, learning or other developmental differences. We also realize that children with developmental differences are likely to have unique needs during this uncertain time.

In addition to the resources below, remember the **existing supports** you have in place for your child who may be available to provide guidance; these may include school staff and therapists, your primary care provider, and your existing medical and allied health specialists (psychology, counseling, speech, occupational therapy, ABA, etc.).

If your child is registered with a state agency for services or case management, the agency may be able to provide crisis support. While some offices are closed, many professionals are working remotely and can respond to questions. In addition, some providers can offer phone or telehealth (video conferencing) appointments even when the office is closed.

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### **ONLINE RESOURCES**

Multiple centers and organizations regionally and nationally have compiled comprehensive autism & developmental disabilities toolkits and websites specifically for families during the COVID-19 situation:

#### **Autism**

- ❑ Supporting Individuals with Autism Through Uncertain Times toolkit (UNC) - <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/sites/afirm.fpg.unc.edu/files/covid-resources/Supporting%20Individuals%20with%20Autism%20through%20Uncertain%20Times%20Full%20Packet%200.pdf>
- ❑ Guide for supporting behavior, routines, school, and many other topics (ECHO Autism) - <https://echoautism.org/parent-resources-during-covid-19/>
- ❑ Mental Health and Respite, Modifying Routines, Community Support and more (Autism Society) - [www.autism-society.org/news/covid-19update](http://www.autism-society.org/news/covid-19update)
- ❑ Parenting Tips, Family Information on coping during a crisis and support for those with Autism (Thompson Center for Autism) - <https://thompsoncenter.missouri.edu/covid19/>
- ❑ Autism Resources, news, what to know about COVID-19 outbreak (Autism Speaks) – <https://www.autismspeaks.org/covid-19-information-and-resources>

### Down Syndrome & COVID-19

- ❑ MassGeneral Hospital fact sheet - <https://mailchi.mp/779134e78b2d/covid-19-and-down-syndrome-updates?fbclid=IwAR35zQB3jb1Qm6zunQ2K5g3mHAWBMDbukU2mc0hhzHUCQUdT19A-c00QyZ0>
- ❑ National Down Syndrome Society fact sheet - [https://www.ndss.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_-1.pdf](https://www.ndss.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus_Fact_Sheet_-1.pdf)

**National Fragile X Foundation** | <https://fragilex.org/blog/covid-19-my-child-is-home-from-school-or-work-or-a-day-program-what-do-i-do/>

### Plain language information about COVID-19 for individuals with disabilities

- ❑ <https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plain-Language-Information-on-Coronavirus.pdf>
- ❑ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJ8eeC-tVD4&feature=youtu.be>

### Special Education, IEPs, and ADA resources

- ❑ Special Education rights Q&A (Department of Education) - [https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf?utm\\_content&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_name&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term&fbclid=IwAR0AtwCAMTVaGe6y\\_DaEVbvRD0kuGAUiTx\\_ijn57YTkfV4bcBXmjxczeMuo](https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf?utm_content&utm_medium=email&utm_name&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term&fbclid=IwAR0AtwCAMTVaGe6y_DaEVbvRD0kuGAUiTx_ijn57YTkfV4bcBXmjxczeMuo)
- ❑ <http://www.nysed.gov/coronavirus>
- ❑ Compilation of special education guidance (Wright's Law) - <https://www.wrightslaw.com/nltr/20/nl.0319.htm>
- ❑ National Center for Learning Disabilities resources - <https://www.nclld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/A-Parents-Guide-to-Virtual-Learning-4-Actions-To-Improve-your-Childs-Experience-with-Online-Learning.pdf>
- ❑ Online learning for kids with disabilities, free educational resources, learning activities, DIY and more (Families Together, Inc. of Kansas) - <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Activities---Resources---COVID-19-Students-with-Disabilities---HCBS-Waiver---and-more---.html?soid=1102230230312&aid=Djfc5G0GHRM>

### Online behavioral, teaching and activity resources

- ❑ Children's Mercy Parenting videos: <https://www.childrensmercy.org/departments-and-clinics/developmental-and-behavioral-health/autism-clinic/family-training-opportunities/online-training-modules/>
- ❑ Help is in Your Hands (free naturalistic developmental-behavioral coaching videos for parents of young children): <https://helpisinyourhands.org/course>
- ❑ National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools resources for home education - <https://www.ncsecs.org/news/resources-for-educating-students-with-disabilities-during-the-coronavirus-crisis/>
- ❑ Exercise as a strategy to increase attention, improve self-control, decrease impulsive behavior - <https://www.autismspeaks.org/expert-opinion/can-exercise-improve-behavior-help-encouraging-child-who-has-autism>

## **Emergency or Crisis Contacts**

Author: Gail Robertson, PhD and Angela Guzman, MSW

Experiencing an increase in anxiety, worry, fear, or loneliness are **normal responses** to the changing world around us right now. Stress comes in many forms, from jobs, money, housing and food, to stress around your children's education and huge changes in your routines. Being isolated, physically distanced from your support networks, and having uncertainty about the future can make these feelings even worse.

Reaching out virtually to your people, to new people, and engaging with others experiencing similar feelings can help with feelings of loneliness and uncertainty. Here are some steps for you and your family to follow if feeling overwhelmed.

### **Step 1: Creating A Safety Net:**

Having an **emergency plan** in place is a helpful tool and can have additional benefits. The development of an emergency plan can reduce anxiety and may help with preventing or reducing the impact of the crisis. An emergency plan is not a magic wand, but a **safety net** including action steps, contacts, and resources to provide support during crisis.

During times of increased stress, decision making can be difficult. It is important to identify and store emergency contacts and information in a consolidated, easy to access place. Emergency contacts may include friends or family members that have agreed to provide support during a time of crisis. A key part of a crisis plan is determining which local hospital's emergency department is best suited for your family. Things to consider would include proximity and insurance coverage. You should also include a list of current medications, allergies, and other pertinent medical information. Maintaining emergency information on paper and electronically reduces the likelihood of not being able to access your information when needed.

Important sources of guidance and information during COVID-19 also include:

CDC | <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

NYS | <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

NYC | <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-main.page>

Nassau | <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/4946/Coronavirus-COVID-19>

Suffolk | <https://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Health-Services/Health-Bulletins/Novel-Coronavirus#!/detail/403326>

Westchester | <https://health.westchestergov.com/2019-novel-coronavirus>

## Step 2: Maintaining Current Care

If possible, keep appointments with medical and behavioral health professionals. They may be able to assist with the development of your emergency plan and identify concerns early. These appointments may not be face to face to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. Consult with your provider for additional details about **telehealth** options.

If you or a family member are concerned about exposure, current illness, or are looking for guidance on medical care, please contact your Primary Care Provider (PCP). Please call 911 or go to the Emergency Room if concerns are life-threatening.

If you don't have a PCP:

<https://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/resources>

## Step 3: Knowing when to get more help:

**Feeling Overwhelmed:** If you or someone you know experiences signs of stress that feel unmanageable, get in the way of daily life, or are simply overwhelming, please contact:

### **Online Counseling** (please check with insurance first)

There are many different sites that provide connection with online counselors. These are just a couple, but online services vary widely. If you currently have a mental health provider, please speak with them first about what options they have for virtual telehealth.

Open Counseling | <https://www.opencounseling.com/>

Talk Space | <https://www.talkspace.com/>

Better Help | <https://www.betterhelp.com/online-counseling/>

### **Community Mental Health Centers: Many are still open or offering virtual visits**

(changing availability, call before walking-in)

- Need IMMEDIATE Mental Health Support:** If you or someone you know feels they need immediate support and help to function or stay safe, please go to your nearest Emergency Department. Call ahead and make sure that they are accepting psychiatric patients.
- Feelings or Thoughts about Death/Dying/Suicide:** If you, your child, or someone you know threatens to hurt or kill themselves, or someone else, or talks about death, dying, or suicide, please immediately contact:
  - MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS EMERGENCY**  
Call 911



- ❑ **PERSON IS SAFE:** Concerns, thoughts, feelings
- ❑ <https://nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/> or **1-800-NYC-WELL**
- ❑ <https://longislandcrisiscenter.org/> or **(516) 679-1111**
- ❑ <https://mentalhealth.westchestergov.com/> or **(914) 925-5959**

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

**English** | Toll-free: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Website: <https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

**Español** | Toll-free: 1-888-628-9454

Website: <https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/en-espanol>

<http://www.suicide.org/hotlines/new-york-suicide-hotlines.html>

**Crisis Online Chat groups:**

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>

<https://www.imalive.org/>

**Crisis text line:**

Text **HOME** to **741741**

Additional Information | <https://www.crisistextline.org/>

- ❑ **PERSON IS UNSAFE:** Threats or Actions, Isolated or Alone  
**Immediately contact: 911 or go to an Emergency Room**