

Routine, Routine, Routine

COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted everyone's normal routine and has presented challenges parents and caregivers must face. An article, "**Working and Learning from Home During the COVID-19 Outbreak**", published by [HealthyKids.org](https://www.healthykids.org), suggests that we stick to as much of our normal routine as we can to help create structure around our day that is conducive for positive productivity.



Below are some suggestions/ideas that [HealthyKids.org](https://www.healthykids.org) gives on how to stay on track:

- Resume morning routines as you would normally.
- Create a designated workspace for each person in the family and minimize distractions. (i.e., TV, electronics)
- Create a schedule for learning, exercise, chores, and breaks.
 - Create a work schedule for yourself. It will help keep you on track with your work-related responsibilities and will let your children know when your workday is done.
- Incorporate time for healthy lunches and snacks in your schedule.
 - Per the [NC DPI.gov](https://www.ncdpi.gov) website: Several schools are offering pre-packaged meals that you can pick-up if your child needs them. Text **FOODNC** to **877-877** to get information on the closest meal sites in your county and the serving times.
- Eat dinner as a family and use that time to connect with one another.
- Plan for fun family-oriented activities in the evening. (i.e., board games, watching a movie, reading, and exercise)
- Follow the same bedtime routines to ensure that everyone gets a good night's rest. (i.e., bath time, reading books)

Staying Connected

Practicing social distancing is a must, however, it is still important to stay in touch with family and friends. Listed below are some different apps that are available to help your family stay connected.

- [FaceTime](https://www.apple.com/face-time/) (iOS, Mac)- video conferencing app for one-to-one video chats.
- [Zoom](https://zoom.us/) (iOS, Android, Mac, Windows)- video conferencing app for reliable, clear, group video calls.
- [Bluejeans](https://www.bluejeans.com/) (iOS, Android, Mac, Windows, Linux, Web)- best video conferencing from any device.



Coping, Conversation, & COVID



To help children ascertain a sense of safety and decrease anxiety parents/caregivers should have honest and accurate conversations about the COVID pandemic. Below are general principles and guidelines outlined in a [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0515-talking-children-covid.html) article, “**Talking with Children about Coronavirus Disease 2019**,” that adults can use when discussing the pandemic with a child.

General guidelines for talking to children

Stay calm and reassuring.

- Children will react to what you say and how you say it, to them and the conversations you have with others.

Be available to listen and to talk.

- Make time to have conversations and to answer their questions.
- Avoid using language that might blame others, create stigmas, or is inaccurate.

Be attentive to what children are exposed to on television, radio, or online.

- Think about limiting screen time that is focused on COVID-19. Too much information is not always a good thing.

Give information that is honest and accurate.

- Provide children information that is truthful, and age/developmentally appropriate for the child.
- Make children aware that information on COVID-19 shared on the Internet & social media may be inaccurate so they need to check with a parent first.

Teach children good habits that will help reduce the spread of germs. (i.e., sneeze into elbow, or tissue)

- Make proper handwashing a habit with your children, especially after using the bathroom, blowing their nose, preparing food, and eating.
- Hand sanitizer can be used if water and soap are not available. Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol.
- The CDC posted YouTube videos to help teach kids about germs and how to properly wash their hands. See below:
 - [Wash Your Hands](#)
 - [Fight Germs](#)

Below are additional links that will help you and your child learn about COVID:

- ❖ [Just for kids: A Comic Exploring the New Corona Virus](#)
- ❖ [Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting From COVID-19](#)

Coping, Conversations, & COVID cont.

In the article published by National Child Traumatic Stress Network ([NCTSN.org](https://www.nctsn.org)), “**Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019**,” it included the informational chart depicted below. It shows different ways in which a child, based on their age, may react to the COVID-19, and offers the best ways in which a parent/caregiver can help alleviate some of the challenges for the child.

Age Group	Reactions	How to Help
Preschool	Fear of being alone, bad dreams Speech difficulties Loss of bladder/bowel control, constipation, bed-wetting Change in appetite Increased temper tantrums, whining, or clinging behaviors	Patience and tolerance Provide reassurance (verbal and physical) Encourage expression through play, reenactment, storytelling Allow short-term changes in sleep arrangements Plan calming, comforting activities before bedtime Maintain regular family routines Avoid media
School-Age (ages 6-12)	Irritability, whining, aggressive behavior Clinging, Nightmares Sleep/appetite disturbance Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches) Withdrawal from peers, loss of interest Competition for parents’ attention Forgetfulness about chores and new information learned at school	Patience, tolerance, and reassurance Play sessions and staying in touch with friends through telephone and Internet Regular exercise and stretching Engage in educational activities (workbooks, educational games) Participate in structured household chores Set gentle but firm limits Discuss the current outbreak and encourage questions. Include what is being done in the family and community Encourage expression through play and conversation Help family create ideas for enhancing health promotion behaviors and maintaining family routines Limit media exposure, talking about what they have seen/heard including at school Address any stigma or discrimination occurring and clarify misinformation
ADOLESCENT (ages 13-18)	Physical symptoms (headaches, rashes, etc.) Sleep/appetite disturbance Agitation or decrease in energy, apathy Ignoring health promotion behaviors Isolating from peers and loved ones Concerns about stigma and injustices Avoiding/cutting school	Patience, tolerance, and reassurance Encourage continuation of routines Encourage discussion of outbreak experience with peers, family (but do not force) Stay in touch with friends through telephone, Internet, video games Participate in family routines, including chores, supporting younger siblings, and planning strategies to enhance health promotion behaviors Limit media exposure, talking about what they have seen/heard including at school Discuss and address stigma, prejudice and potential injustices occurring during

Homeschooling/ Educational Resources:

To be successful during this time stay in contact with your child's teacher/school. Your child's teacher and school will provide you with educational material and resources that your child will need to stay on track.

NC Office of Early Learning – NCDPI suggests the following tips for schooling children at home:

1. Have a lesson plan for the day so children will be prepared.
2. Take breaks between assignments. (i.e., walk, read a book, and play) Remember younger school-aged children have a shorter attention span, make sure to incorporate breaks more frequently with them (i.e., every 20-30 minutes).
3. Children can learn, not by books alone, but by helping with gardening, cooking, chores, and exploring the outside world through play.
4. Remember that you are not teaching 18-25 students. 6 hours of instructional time is not needed!

Early Learners	1-2 Hours
5 th -6 th Grade	2-4 Hours
7 th & up	4+ Hours

5. Be positive, find enjoyment, & make memories through learning.
6. Take the learning outside. Fresh air & sunshine does the body good!



Dr. Beverly Emory, deputy superintendent for North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, created a video, [COVID 19 with Dr. Beverly Emory](#), that gives information on where to find online resources to assist teachers and parents in providing instruction to students. Parents can find instructional resources, support and guidance, and more on the [COVID-19 Response and Resources](#) website. Below are additional educational resources for virtual learning:

San Diego Zoo		The San Diego Zoo has a website just for kids with amazing videos, activities, and games. Enjoy the tour!
Yellowstone National Park Virtual Field Trip		Mud Volcano, Mammoth Hot Springs, and so much more. Tour Yellowstone National Park!
MARS!!!		Explore the surface of Mars on the Curiosity Rover. They are updating from WEBVR to WEBXR now, but 360 Mode offers a digital view!
Animal Cameras		Live Cam's at the San Diego Zoo, Monterey Bay Aquarium live.com , Florida Cam's at Zoo Atlanta & Animal Cam's at Houston Zoo, Georgia Aquarium has Jellyfish, Beluga Wholes, and more
Virtual Farm Tour		This Canadian site FarmyFood360 offers 3 Virtual Tours of farms from minks, pigs, and cows, to apples and eggs.
U.S. Space and Rocket Museum in Huntsville, AL		See the Saturn 5 Rocket on YouTube and more on this tour thanks to a real father/son outing.
Discovergy Education Virtual Field Trips		A few of the field trip topics include Polar Bears and the Tundra, Social Emotional Skills, STEM manufacturing
The Louvre		Travel to Paris, France to see amazing works of art at The Louvre with this virtual field trip.
The Great Wall of China		This Virtual Tour of the Great Wall of China is beautiful and makes history come to life.
Boston Children's Museum		Walk through the Boston Children's Museum thanks to Google Maps! This virtual tour allows kids to explore 3 floors of fun.

[Foster-edu.com](#) – supplemental educational & virtual field trip links.

[Amazing Educational Resources](#) – educational resources from math, history, science, & more.

[Scholastic](#) - educational videos & books designed for kids in PreK to high school along with 20 days of lessons.

[CK-12](#) – age-appropriate instructions for all subjects of learning.

[Prodigy Math](#) – interactive mathematical video games

[Commonsense Media](#)– educational instruction for kids of all ages.

[Google](#) – teacher approved apps that aid in learning.

[Calvert Homeschool](#) – 3 months of free curriculum material

[123 Homeschool](#) – free printable worksheets for K-8th grade

Work Cited:

American Academy Pediatrics - HealthyChildren.org. (March 2020). *Working and Learning from Home During The COVID-19 Outbreak*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/Working-and-Learning-from-Home-During-the-COVID-19-Outbreak.aspx>> [Accessed 17 April 2020].

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>> [Accessed 17 April 2020].

Public Schools of NC. Childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov. (2020). *School Nutrition Services — Child Nutrition*. [online] Available at: <<https://childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/>> [Accessed 17 April 2020].

National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Nctsn.org. (2020). *Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019* [online] Available at: <https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/factsheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf> [Accessed 17 April 2020].

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. NCDPI. (2020). *NC Office Of Early Learning - Tips for Schooling at Home*. [online] Sites.google.com. Available at: <<https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/nck-3fap/remote-learning/tips-for-schooling-at-home>> [Accessed 17 April 2020].