

COVID-19 PARENTING

Keeping Children Safe Online

Children and teens are now spending a lot more time online. Being connected helps them reduce the impact of COVID-19 and encourages them to continue with their lives...but it also presents risks and dangers.

Online Risks.

Adults targeting children for sexual purposes on social media, gaming, and messaging platforms.

Harmful content – violence, misogyny, xenophobia, inciting suicide and self-harm, misinformation, etc.

Teens sharing personal information and sexual photos or videos of themselves.

Cyberbullying from peers and strangers.

Tech fixes to protect your children online.

- Set up **parental controls**.
- Turn on **SafeSearch** on your browser.
- Set up strict **privacy settings** on online apps and games.
- Cover webcams when not in use.

Create healthy and safe online habits.

- Involve your **child or teen** in creating family tech agreements about healthy device use.
- Create device-free spaces and times in your house (eating, playing, schoolwork, and sleeping).
- Help your child learn how to keep personal information private, especially from strangers – some people are not who they say they are!
- Remind your children that what goes online stays online (messages, photos, and videos).



Spend time with your child or teen online.

- Explore websites, social media, games, and apps together.
- Talk to your teen on how to report inappropriate content (see below).
- **Common Sense Media** has great advice for apps, games and entertainment for different ages.

Keep your child safe with open communication.

- Tell your children that if they experience something online that makes them feel upset, uncomfortable, or scared, they can talk to you and you will not get mad or punish them.
- Be alert to signs of distress. Notice if your child is being withdrawn, upset, secretive, or obsessed with online activities.
- Create trusting relationships and open communication through positive support and encouragement.
- Note that every child is unique and may use different ways to communicate. Take time to adjust your message for your child's needs. For example, children with learning disabilities, may require information in simple format.

Share with colleagues, friends and family | Spread the word | Keep children safe online.

Report online violence against children:

Other resources:

CHILD HELPLINE

INHOPE HOTLINES

IWF PORTALS

SAFETY BOOKLET

UNICEF

OTHER LANGUAGES

EVIDENCE-BASE



unicef
for every child



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1 COVID-19 PARENTING One-on-One Time

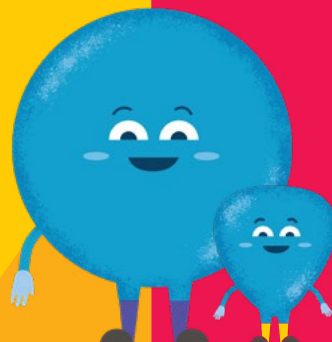
Can't go to work? Schools closed? Worried about money? It is normal to feel stressed and overwhelmed.

School shutdown is also a chance to make better relationships with our children and teenagers.
One-on-One time is free and fun. It makes children feel loved and secure, and shows them that they are important.

Set aside time to spend with each child



It can be for just 20 minutes, or longer – it's up to us. It can be at the same time each day so children or teenagers can look forward to it.



Ask your child what they would like to do



Choosing builds their self confidence. If they want to do something that isn't OK with physical distancing, then this is a chance to talk with them about this. (see next leaflet)

Ideas with your baby/toddler



- > Copy their facial expression and sounds
- > Sing songs, make music with pots and spoons
- > Stack cups or blocks
- > Tell a story, read a book, or share pictures

Switch off the TV and phone. This is virus-free time


Ideas with your teenager

- > Talk about something they like: sports, music, celebrities, friends
- > Go for a walk – outdoors or around the home
- > Exercise together to their favorite music

Ideas with your young child

- > Read a book or look at pictures
- > Go for a walk – outdoors or around the home
- > Dance to music or sing songs!
- > Do a chore together – make cleaning and cooking a game!
- > Help with school work

**Listen to them, look at them.
Give them your full attention.
Have fun!**

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2 COVID-19 PARENTING

Keeping It Positive

It's hard to feel positive when our kids or teenagers are driving us crazy. We often end up saying "Stop doing that!" But children are much more likely to do what we ask if we give them positive instructions and lots of praise for what they do right.

Say the behaviour you want to see

- Use positive words when telling your child what to do; like 'Please put your clothes away' (instead of 'Don't make a mess')

It's all in the delivery

- Shouting at your child will just make you and them more stressed and angrier. Get your child's attention by using their name. Speak in a calm voice.

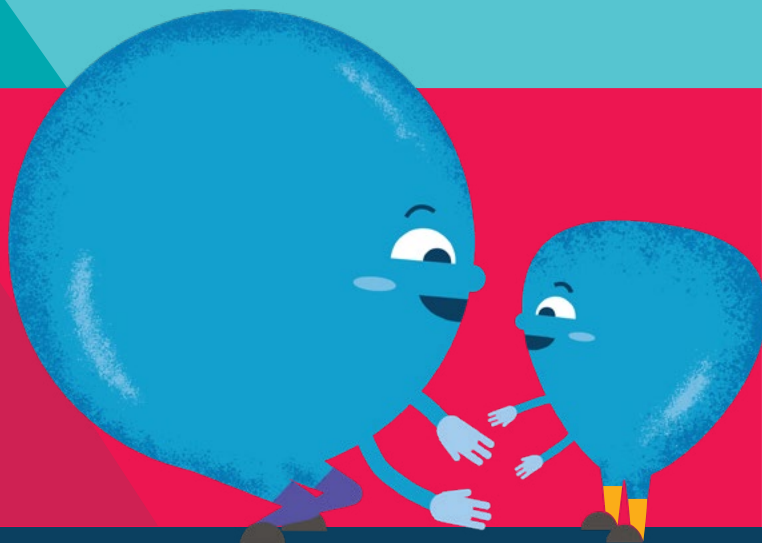
Praise your child when they are behaving well

- Try praising your child or teenager for something they have done well. They may not show it, but you'll see them doing that good thing again. It will also reassure them that you notice and care.



Get real

- Can your child actually do what you are asking them? It is very hard for a child to keep quiet inside for a whole day but maybe they can keep quiet for 15 minutes while you are on a call.



Help your teen stay connected

- Teens especially need to be able to communicate with their friends. Help your teen connect through social media and other safe distancing ways. This is something you can do together, too!

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3 COVID-19 PARENTING Structure Up

COVID-19 has taken away our daily work, home and school routines. This is hard for children, teenagers and for you. Making new routines can help.

Create a flexible but consistent daily routine

- > Make a schedule for you and your children that has time for structured activities as well as free time. This can help children feel more secure and better behaved.
- > Children or teenagers can help plan the routine for the day – like making a school timetable. Children will follow this better if they help to make it.
- > Include exercise in each day - this helps with stress and kids with lots of energy at home.



You are a model for your child's behavior

- > If you practice keeping safe distances and hygiene yourself, and treat others with compassion, especially those who are sick or vulnerable – your children and teenagers will learn from you.

Teach your child about keeping safe distances

- > If it is OK in your country, get children outside.
- > You can also write letters and draw pictures to share with people. Put them up outside your home for others to see!
- > You can reassure your child by talking about how you are keeping safe. Listen to their suggestions and take them seriously.

Make handwashing and hygiene fun

Make a 20-second song for washing hands. Add actions! Give children points and praise for regular handwashing.

Make a game to see how few times we can touch our faces with a reward for the least number of touches (you can count for each other).

At the end of each day, take a minute to think about the day. Tell your child about one positive or fun thing they did.

Praise yourself for what you did well today. You are a star!



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4 COVID-19 PARENTING Bad Behavior

All children misbehave. It is normal when children are tired, hungry, afraid, or learning independence. And they can drive us crazy when stuck at home.

Redirect

- > Catch bad behavior early and redirect your kids' attention from a bad to a good behavior.
- > Stop it before it starts! When they start to get restless, you can distract with something interesting or fun: "Come, let's go outside for a walk!"

Take a Pause

- < Feel like screaming?
Give yourself a 10-second pause. Breathe in and out slowly five times. Then try to respond in a calmer way.
- < Millions of parents say this helps - A LOT.


Use consequences

Consequences help teach our children responsibility for what they do. They also allow discipline that is controlled. This is more effective than hitting or shouting.

- > Give your child a choice to follow your instruction before giving them the consequence.
- > Try to stay calm when giving the consequence.
- > Make sure you can follow through with the consequence. For example, taking away a teenager's phone for a week is hard to enforce. Taking it away for one hour is more realistic.
- > Once the consequence is over, give your child a chance to do something good, and praise them for it.

Keep using Tips 1-3

- > One-on-One time, praise for being good, and consistent routines will reduce bad behaviour.
- > Give your children and teens simple jobs with responsibilities. Just make sure it is something they are able to do. And praise them when they do it!

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5 COVID-19 PARENTING

Keep Calm and Manage Stress

This is a stressful time. Take care of yourself, so you can support your children.

You are not alone.

Millions of people have the same fears as us. Find someone who you can talk to about how you are feeling. Listen to them. Avoid social media that makes you feel panicked.

Take a break.

We all need a break sometimes. When your children are asleep, do something fun or relaxing for yourself. Make a list of healthy activities that YOU like to do. You deserve it!

Listen to your kids.

Be open and listen to your children. Your children will look to you for support and reassurance. Listen to your children when they share how they are feeling. Accept how they feel and give them comfort.



Take a Pause.

1-minute relaxation activity that you can do whenever you are feeling stressed or worried.

Step 1: Set up

- Find a comfortable sitting position, your feet flat on the floor, your hands resting in your lap.
- Close your eyes if you feel comfortable.

Step 2: Think, feel, body

- Ask yourself, "What am I thinking now?"
- Notice your thoughts. Notice if they are negative or positive.
- Notice how you feel emotionally. Notice if your feelings are happy or not.
- Notice how your body feels. Notice anything that hurts or is tense.

Step 3: Focus on your breath

- Listen to your breath as it goes in and out.
- You can put a hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall with each breath.
- You may want to say to yourself "It's okay. Whatever it is, I am okay."
- Then just listen to your breath for a while.

Step 4: Coming back

- Notice how your whole body feels.
- Listen to the sounds in the room.

Step 5: Reflecting

- Think 'do I feel different at all?'.
- When you are ready, open your eyes.

Taking a Pause can also be helpful when you find your child is irritating you or has done something wrong. It gives you a chance to be calmer. Even a few deep breaths or connecting with the feeling of the floor beneath can make a difference. You can also Take a Pause with your children!

For more information click below links:

Parenting tips
from WHO

Parenting tips
from UNICEF

In worldwide
languages

EVIDENCE-BASE



CHILDHOOD
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for every child



End Violence
Against Children



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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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6 COVID-19 PARENTING

Talking about COVID-19

Be willing to talk. They will already have heard something. Silence and secrets do not protect our children. Honesty and openness do. Think about how much they will understand. You know them best.

Be open and listen

Allow your child to talk freely. Ask them open questions and find out how much they already know.

Be honest

Always answer their questions truthfully. Think about how old your child is and how much they can understand.

Be supportive

Your child may be scared or confused. Give them space to share how they are feeling and let them know you are there for them.

It is OK not to know the answers

It is fine to say "We don't know, but we are working on it; or we don't know, 'but we think'." Use this as an opportunity to learn something new with your child!

Heroes not bullies

Explain that COVID-19 has nothing to do with the way someone looks, where they are from, or what language they speak. Tell your child that we can be compassionate to people who are sick and those who are caring for them.

Look for stories of people who are working to stop the outbreak and are caring for sick people.

There are a lot of stories going around

Some may not be true. Use trustworthy sites:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public> and

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19> from WHO and UNICEF.

End on a good note

Check to see if your child is okay. Remind them that you care and that they can talk to you anytime. Then do something fun together!

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Parenting tips
from WHO

Parenting tips
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COVID-19 PARENTING

Family harmony at home

When we model peaceful and loving relationships, our children feel more secure and loved. Positive language, active listening, and empathy help maintain a peaceful and happy family environment these under stressful times.

We are models for our kids

- How we talk and behave in front of others is a big influence on how they behave too!
- Try to talk kindly to everyone in the family, adults and children
- Bad communication between adults in the household can have a negative impact on our children
- The more we practice modelling peaceful, loving relationships for our children the more secure and loved they will feel

Share the load

- Looking after children and other family members is difficult, but it's much easier when responsibilities are shared
- Try to share household chores, childcare, and other tasks equally amongst family members
- Create a schedule for time "on" and time "off" with other adults in your household
- It is okay to ask for help when you are feeling tired or stressed so that you can take a break

Feeling stressed or angry?

- Give yourself a 10-second pause. Breathe in and out slowly five times. Then try to respond in a calmer way. Millions of parents say this helps - A LOT
- Call a truce when you can see arguments building up, and go into another room or outside if you can
- See Tip Sheets on "When We Get Angry" and "Keep Calm and Manage Stress"

Use positive language. It works!

- Tell others what you want them to do instead of what you don't want them to do: Instead of "Stop shouting," try "Please speak more quietly"
- Praise makes others feel appreciated and good about themselves. Simple words like, "Thank you for clearing the dinner," or "Thank you for watching the baby" can make a big difference

Nice things to do together as a family

- Let each family member take turns to choose a whole-family activity each day
- Find ways to spend quality time with your partner and other adults in your home, too!

Be an empathetic active listener

- Listen to others when they are talking with you
- Be open and show them that you hear what they are saying
- It can help to even summarise what you have heard before responding: "What I hear you saying is..."



Click [HERE](#) for useful resources and support if you are experiencing violence at home

For more information click below links:

TIPS FROM WHO

TIPS FROM UNICEF

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World Health Organization



for every child



United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



WORLD VIOLENCE ORGANIZATION



End Violence Against Children



INTERNET GOOD THINGS



PARENTING FOR LIFELONG HEALTH



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CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

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COVID-19 PARENTING When We Get Angry

We love our children and teenagers, but the stresses of COVID-19, money and lockdown can make us angry. Here is how we can maintain control and manage our anger so we do not hurt others.

Stop the river at the source

- > The same things usually make us get stressed and angry every time
- > What makes you angry? When does it happen? How do you normally react?
- > Prevent it from starting. If it happens when you are tired, get some sleep or rest. If it's hunger, try to be sure you can eat. If it's feeling alone, ask someone for support
- > Look after yourself. Try the 'take a pause' and 'managing stress' resource sheets for ideas



Brain science shows if you control your anger or do something positive you increase your child's brain development.

That's real success!

Take a break

- > When you start feeling angry, take a 20-second cool down. Breathe in and out slowly 5 times before you speak or move
- > Go somewhere else for ten minutes to regain control of your emotions. If you have safe outdoor space, go outside
- > If it's a baby that won't stop crying, it's OK to leave them safely on their back and walk away for a bit. Call someone to calm you down. Check on them every 5-10 minutes

Take care of yourself

- > We all need to connect. Talk to friends, family, and other support networks every day
- > Cut back on drinking or don't drink, especially when the kids are awake
- > Do you have weapons or things that can be used to hit others? Lock them up, hide them or take them out of the home
- > If it's not safe for them at home it is OK for children to go out to get help or stay somewhere else for a while

The COVID-19 crisis isn't forever – we just have to get through it now...one day at a time.

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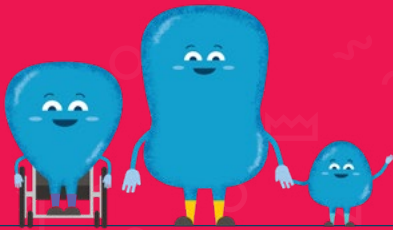
COVID-19 PARENTING

Parenting in crowded homes and communities

Keeping your family healthy and safe from COVID-19 can feel even harder when you live in crowded conditions. There are things you can do to make this easier for your family.

Stay where you are

- Limit those leaving and returning to your immediate living space to as few and as infrequent as possible
- Only leave your household or area for essential reasons like getting food or medical attention



Help your children with physical distancing

- Explain to your children that they have an important job of keeping themselves and their community healthy by temporarily physically distancing from others
- Show them extra positive attention when they make an effort to practice safe physical distancing from others

Make handwashing and hygiene fun!

- It might be hard to find soap and water, but practicing good hygiene is more important now than ever
- Try to wash all family members' hands as often as possible
- Let children teach each other how to wash their hands
- Encourage children to avoid touching their face

Share the load

- Looking after children and other family members is difficult in cramped spaces, but it's much easier when responsibilities are shared
- Try to share household chores, childcare, and other tasks equally amongst family members
- Create a schedule for time "on" and time "off" with other adults in your household
- It is okay to ask for help when you are feeling tired or stressed so that you can take a break

Exercise daily

- Encourage children to think of activities they can do to exercise while avoiding contact with who do not live already in your immediate space
- Jumping activities, dancing or running in circles can be fun!

Take a Pause

- You might not have space to yourself to deal with all the stress and emotions you are feeling
- Notice when you are feeling stressed or upset and take a pause...even three deep breaths can make a difference!

Well done! Millions of families finds that this helps



Keep using Tips 1-6

Keeping positive, having a routine and trying to get some one-to-one time with each child when you can will help you manage your child behaviours and your feelings.

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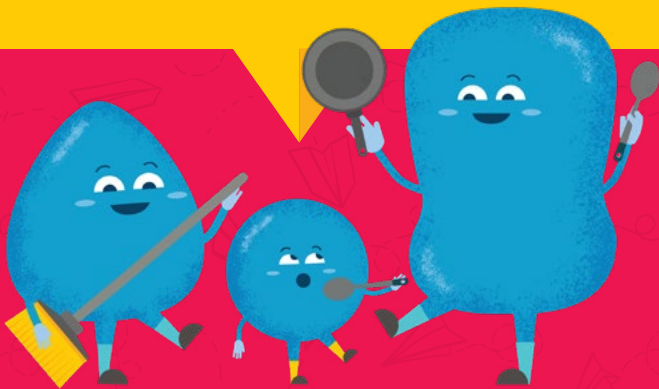
COVID-19 PARENTING

Learning through play

Millions of children face school closure and isolation in their own home.
This tip is about learning through play – something that can be fun for all ages!

Types of play

- There are so many different types of play that can be both fun AND educational
- Language, numbers, objects, drama, and music games give children opportunities to explore and express themselves in a safe and fun way



Telling stories

- Tell your children a story from your own childhood
- Ask your children to tell you a story
- Make up a new story together starting with "Once upon a time..." Each person adds a new sentence to the story
- Act out a favorite story or movie – older children can even direct younger ones while learning responsibility

Change the object!

- Every day household items like brooms, mops, or scarfs can become fun props for games
- Place an object in the center of the room and whenever someone has an idea, they jump in and show the rest what the object can be
- For example, a broom might become a horse or a microphone or even a guitar!

Movement games

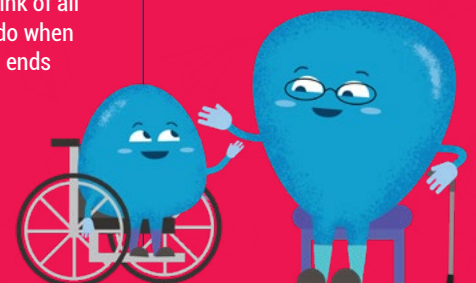
- Create a dance choreography to your children's favorite songs. First person does a dance move and everyone else copies. Everyone takes turns being the leader
- "Challenge" who can do the most toe touches – jumping jacks, windmill toe touches in a minute
- "Mirror" each other – facial expressions, movements, sounds. One person can start as the leader and then switch. Try it with no leaders!
- Freeze dance: Play music or someone sings a song, and everyone dances. When the music stops, everyone must freeze. Last person still dancing becomes the judge for the next round
- Animal dance: Same as above but when the music stops, call out a name of an animal, and everyone has to become that animal

Memory game

- First person says, "When COVID-19 lockdown ends, I am going to... (e.g., go to the park)"
- Second person adds to first person, "When COVID-19 lockdown ends, I am going to the park and... (e.g., visit my best friend)"
- Each person adds to the previous trying to think of all of the fun things to do when COVID-19 lockdown ends

Singing

- Singing songs to your baby help develop language
- Play or sing a song, and the first one to guess it right becomes the next leader
- Make up a song about handwashing or physical distancing. Add dance movements!



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