

Helping Children (and Their Families) While Isolated at Home

1. Maintain consistent routines
 - a. Sleep/wake routines
 - b. Meals
 - c. Expectations for child behaviors
 - i. For children with behavior intervention plans, continue to implement the plan with fidelity
 - ii. Contact the school and/or provider for support as needed
2. Increase structure
 - a. Plan the day
 - b. Involve your child in the development of a daily “schedule.” All of us tend to be happier and more agreeable when people do things WITH us, rather than to us or for us.
 - c. Record this “schedule” of activities as a checklist or as a series of pictures that children can remove as they complete the activity. A series of hand drawn post-it notes works well for this. For children who are readers, a simple checklist is appropriate.
 - d. Intersperse preferred activities across the day. For example, first eat breakfast, then load the dishwasher with breakfast dishes, wipe the counter, and empty the trash. When those things are finished, we will set the timer for you to use technology for 15 minutes.
 - e. Timers can help structure activities the child likes and dislikes. For example, timers can limit the time children spend on preferred activities (“You may use your technology for 20 minutes,”) and for nonpreferred activities (“Use your addition flash cards and practice with your sister for 20 minutes. See how many you can get right in that amount of time.”)
 - f. When possible, use a “game/competition” format. In the above example, the child can keep track of his correct responses on a graph over multiple days and the family celebrate any positive trend in correct responses.
3. Ideas for activities children can do at home (to help increase structure)
 - a. [And Next Comes L list of play ideas for kids](#)
 - b. Consider your child’s special interests
 - i. Use this special interest to motivate them to complete less preferred activities. For example, “First ____, Then preferred activity.”
 - ii. If the child likes technology, use this interest to motivate him/her to research a topic appropriate to their grade level/ability. Or, have them prepare a powerpoint on a topic to share with the rest of the family. With a smart TV, you may be able to project it and have popcorn!!!

- c. Embed academic-related activities into the daily schedule
 - i. Math
 - 1. Measure the rooms in the home. Perimeter? Square feet?
 - 2. Measure ingredients for family food prep
 - 3. Look for opportunities to estimate (the number of M&Ms in a bag, weight of laundry detergent, whatever is available)
 - ii. English-Language Arts
 - 1. Put spices in alphabetical order
 - 2. Compare recipes for similar items on Pinterest/share similarities and differences
 - 3. Read (any genre...don't forget poetry!)
 - 4. Write in a journal and describe how you feel today
 - 5. Research school-related topics and write a summary
 - iii. Social Studies
 - 1. Create a visual to post in your house to remind family members to wash their hands
 - 2. Listen/read the news and create a list of all the professions that are discussed. Record how each profession is impacted by the coronavirus?
 - iv. Science
 - 1. Research ways to kill germs at home and identify the pros and cons of each.
 - 2. Conduct your own research and count how many times you (or another family member) touch their face in a 20-minute period.
 - v. Physical activity
 - 1. Weather permitting, spend time outside
 - 2. Some children will need this time to be structured
 - a. Run/walk laps around the yard and give a straw (or other item to use as a counter). Set a goal each day for the number of laps and keep a chart (turn into graph=math too!)
 - b. Make a short outside schedule for the child to follow
 - c. Time your child running, skipping, hopping, etc.
- 4. Social Supports
 - a. Use social stories to help your child make some sense of why he/she is at home, rather than at school.
- 5. Practice strategies that promote self-regulation (this will be good for the whole family)
 - a. Deep breathing activities
 - i. [Coping Skills for Kids: Deep Breathing Exercises](#)
 - ii. [Childhood 101: Fun Breathing Exercises for Kids](#)
 - iii. Check out the many videos online regarding deep breathing for kids
 - b. Progressive relaxation
 - i. [Washington University: Progressive Relaxation Script for Kids](#)

- ii. Check out the many videos and visual supports online regarding progressive relaxation for kids
 - c. Mindfulness activities
 - i. [Positive Psychology: 25 Fun Mindfulness Activities](#)
 - ii. Check out the many videos online regarding mindfulness activities for kids
 - d. Yoga
 - i. [Kids Yoga Stories: Guide to yoga poses](#)
 - ii. Check out the many videos and visual supports online regarding yoga for kids
- 6. Check with your child's school for links/access to instructional technology websites the child uses at schools. Build these activities into the child's daily schedule of activities.
- 7. For children with challenging behaviors for whom a behavior intervention plan is in place, continue to implement that plan with fidelity and consult with your school and/or provider for support.
- 8. For families whose children receive outside services from BCBAs, OTs, SLPs, etc., that may be suspended during this time, reach out for support as needed. These service providers know your child's individual strengths and needs and can be great resources during this time.

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